

A Winter in Paradise



V ON SANDY CAY

A Winter in Paradise

By *ALAN PARSONS*

Illustrated with Photographs taken by the Author

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' There ben manye other dyverse Contrees and manye other Marveyles bezonde that I have not seen : wherefor of hem I can not speke propurly, to tell zou the manere of hem. And also in the Contrees where I have been, ben manye dyversities of manye wondir fulle thinges, mo thanne I make mencion of. . . . And I, that departed from oure Contrees, and passed the See, that have passed many Londes and manye Yles and Contrees, and cerched manye fulle straunge places, and have ben in many a fulle honourable Companye, now I am comen Hom, mawgree my self. . . . From *The Voiage & Travaile of Sir John Maundevile, Kt.*

For

VIOLA

*to whom I owe every precious moment of those
precious three months, in love and gratitude.*

DIARIST'S NOTE

IN the summer of 1924 I was very ill, and was advised to winter abroad. This kind of advice is very easy to give, but usually very difficult to act upon. However, on this occasion it was made possible thanks to the generosity of friends, to whom once again I express my everlasting thanks.

It seemed to us that if we were to do it at all, it was worth doing properly. I had been told to go and sit in the sun, and I was sure that nowhere in Europe could we be sure of finding it.

The map of the world lay open before us ; we narrowed it down to the West Indies, which I had always passionately desired to visit, and then by degrees to the Bahamas, of which enthusiastic friends had spoken to us with bated breath.

This diary was written without the slightest thought of eventual publication, simply to amuse myself and certain friends to whom I sent it home instead of writing letters. Those whom it succeeded in pleasing have suggested to me from time to time that it might amuse a wider audience. That is how this very trivial and personal document has come to see the light of the world, but if our " real estate " adventures in Florida, or our disastrous, but wholly enjoyable, fishing trip to Andros succeed in making any of my readers

smile, I shall feel it has been more than worth while.

As with the text, so with the photographs. The greater part were taken with a cheap Kodak, which cost under a pound, with no other idea than to provide myself with a tangible record of the tour.

I have thought it better to preserve the diary in its original form, carelessly written as it is, rather than attempt to put it into decent English, or add fanciful descriptions from memory. I have made no changes except to alter almost all the names.

If the thing has any virtue at all, it is, I imagine, its spontaneity.

A. P.

June, 1926.

P.S.—Since I wrote the above note, the appalling disasters in Miami, and in a lesser degree in Nassau, have shocked the world.

For myself, I feel it all somehow as a personal calamity, as if I had lost a very dear and valued friend; I find myself continually thinking of the gallant little sponge fleet which put out from Nassau harbour, never to return . . . then of those countless wrecked realtors' offices in Miami, where one night's terror was enough to crush the dreams and hopes of so many ardent young spirits.

"Paradise" I have called these places . . . it seems that does not exist in this world, but so I shall always think of you, my beloved old Nassau, my eager-hearted, friendly young Miami. . . .

A. P.

October, 1926.

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PART I

OUTWARD BOUND AND HAVANA

OUTWARD BOUND AND HAVANA

Wednesday, November 19th, 1924. Never took a wink all night for fear of missing the train, which was due to start at the appalling hour of 8.30. Rose at 6 to finish the packing. Stulik¹ called us at 6.45 in his nightgown. The waiters hauled the luggage down somehow, and we sat down to a preliminary breakfast of tea and toast.

When we got to the Horseshoe the taxi was stopped, because it was thought the kodak had been left behind. A false alarm !

Arrived at Waterloo, we disentangled ourselves from our ten pieces of luggage, bought every illustrated paper, and were lucky enough to find an empty carriage. We started on the tick of 8.30, and at once settled down to a fine breakfast. After that, a long and badly-needed sleep till Southampton.

Arrived at Southampton, we found that Geoffrey² had been true to his word, and had mobilised the entire

¹ My very good friend, the landlord of the Eiffel Tower Hotel, where we were staying

² Geoffrey Corv Wright, my brother-in-law.

Southampton staff of Cory's to meet us. We were royally received. Mr. James and Mr. Thomson of Cory's, and Mr. Crowhurst (the agent for the Holland-America Line) did everything possible to make things easy for us. The *Volendam* was at anchor opposite Calshot, so that we had first a longish



journey on the tender. There I had so long a talk with the Cuban Consul, to whom Mr. Crowhurst had introduced me, that I got chilled to the bone, and had to seek the shelter of the saloon. Mr. Thomson was assiduous in showing the sights of Southampton Water to Viola meanwhile.

After what seemed an interminable time, but which was I suppose twenty minutes, we approached the

Volendam, whose vast bulk greatly reassured me. By that time I was perished with cold, though the sun was shining nicely.

Arrived on the *Volendam*, Mr. Crowhurst at once conducted us to the presence of the Captain, a most genial Dutch gentleman named De Jong, who was obviously too preoccupied with the cares of office to worry much about us or the courteous speeches of the Cuban Consul. Escaped from him we had the same ritual with the Purser.

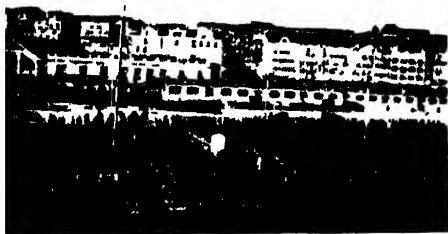
Then came an interminable interval (quite an hour) during which Mr. Thomson and I had nothing to do, while Viola penned her farewell notes. The obvious remedy—the bar—was unaccountably closed. I discovered that it was due to lifeboat drill, which seemed rather premature. I finally took advantage of my new friend, the Purser, to have the bar forcibly opened.

Mr. Thomson then created a slight upset by demanding a Guinness, a drink which, in spite of its popularity at home, is apparently still unknown to the Dutch. I suggested he should have a drop of Scotch instead, which he swallowed with a wry face. I tendered a florin, and received back the sum of three cents. After no less than three false alarms of starting and three false good-byes to Mr. Thomson, we

sat down to lunch. This was fine : evidently the food is going to be quite perfect.

All the afternoon we slept and all the evening, except for the dinner interval.

Thursday, November 20th. Uneventful : an abso-



SANTANDER.

lutely quiet sea. Greatly enjoyed the sea-water baths. The threatened horror of sitting in state at the captain's table, of which Mr. Crowhurst had spoken, never materialized.

Friday, November 21st. Woke up very early so as not to miss the first sight of the Spanish coast. Did not miss it, nor the sunrise, which was fine. Drew in to Santander about 8

Viola went on shore, and entered into an animated Spanish conversation (having no Spanish) about the price of pomegranates. She soon collected a crowd, but returned in triumph with the pomegranates and a mass of Spanish copper coinage. After lunch she went on shore again, and came back laden with sweetmeats and a Spanish-English conversation book.

Currency is now thoroughly mixed between shillings, dollars and pesetas, but I find whatever one buys and whatever coin one proffers, one is apt to receive three cents as change. Met Captain De Jong in the passage, who was genial and apologetic but did not refer to the question of his table. The Spanish gentlemen on board are very noisy and the Cuban Consul is in his element. I find the Dutch Lager a great solace. As against the Spanish the Dutch gentlemen are deaf and dumb, but very efficient and great feeders.

I am glad to say there is no deck quoit element at all. We have wasted all day here and do not push off till to-morrow morning.

Saturday, November 22nd. Got up about ten and went on deck dressed in the usual overcoat and hat, etc. Was pleasantly surprised to find it a hot July

day. Descended hurriedly and took off everything.

Great delay in getting the steerage passengers on board ; a lot of shouting by the Spanish and guttural complaints by the Dutch.

We finally pushed off at twelve. Sat on deck the whole afternoon till five without coat or wrap.

Sunday, November 23rd. Arrived at Corunna early in the morning. Another brilliant July day. Went ashore and had the usual trouble keeping Viola away from the slums. Owing to her height she always collects a crowd in all Latin countries, except Venice, where they are too much used to strangers. In Spain it is particularly awkward, as we are both without Spanish, and it is a complete fallacy to suppose, as she does, that to harangue the crowd, or, indeed, any Spanish gentleman, in fluent Italian is any good. It simply isn't. The languages may be alike to read, but one might as well speak Tibetan as Italian here.

However, we hired a taxi, I having got a phrase out of the conversation book under the heading "cabs." This book was strangely deficient. Thest only possible sentence was "Drive me quick to the public lavatory." However, the taxi-driver was sympathetic, willing to understand and quick at the uptake,



THE TOMB OF SIR JOHN MOORE, CORUNNA.

though speaking himself a difficult Spanish patois. "Al tombo del General Ingles" was enough Spanish for Sir John Moore's tomb, and there we read Mr. Wolfe's very moving poem.

Then we were taken willy-nilly along a precipitous road at breakneck speed to see the lighthouse, which we didn't want to see, but didn't know how to say we didn't. Arrived at the lighthouse, the taxi-man said it was "muy frio," which our paralysed limbs told us meant very cold, so we firmly refused to climb the lighthouse, jumped in again and returned to the city.

By that time the lust for the slums had come on Viola so greatly that I had to let her go, retiring myself to a sunny garden full of tropical plants, but somehow strangely reminiscent of Wembley. After twenty minutes she came back, so unexpected an apparition that I knew there must be a catch, as indeed there was. She had found a market, as she finds it in every town (her only prize up to now Nottingham—a good market). Nothing would content her but I must see it, too. I secured another cab and drove^o without an accident through streets very much narrower than the smaller Venetian *calli* and cobbled.

We reached the market, where the chief exhibit

was a basket of greenery containing a turkey, a bantam and a white rabbit, all feeding together. Viola was promptly mobbed. I sneaked away to a different part of the market and pretended I did not belong to her at all.

We got back somehow to the harbour, where I chartered a motor-boat and fell on to the *Volendam* more dead than alive. We didn't push off till six. To-morrow we touch at Vigo, where fresh delays are threatened.

Monday, November 24th. Arrived at Vigo early this morning. Cold, foggy and drizzling. It just shows that it is no use trying to chase the sun at this time of the year anywhere in Europe.

Our steward's name is Fish—pronounced "Fiss." He is charming, but a little idle and a great pessimist. He has infinite contempt, which he cannot hide, for the things we ask for—most of all sea-water baths at what appear to him unseasonable hours. He has a way of disappearing, so that when his bells ring, all the other stewards collect and cry "Fiss, Fiss, Fiss," all the way down the corridor. Our stewardess is Miss Opstal, who has no English, French, German or Italian ; in fact, only Dutch. However, she only

appears when Fish is more than usually lost, and only to gain time till he is found.

It rained all day at Vigo and we did not go ashore. The Captain told us that owing to the dangers of



AT THE LIGHTHOUSE CORUNNA

navigating the Spanish coast, he had not had a wink of sleep, but that he proposed to sleep that night, in spite of the big storm coming up! This was most disagreeable news and unfortunately it was all too true. We pushed off late, about eleven o'clock, and fell into rough weather at once.

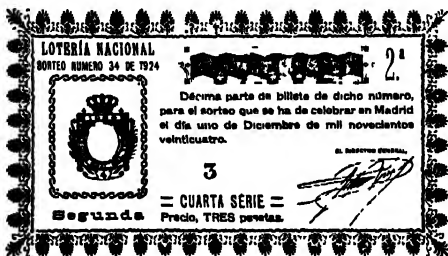
Tuesday, Wednesday, November 25th, 26th. For these two days we rightly did not leave the cabin. With Mothersill I managed to ward off all sickness and I now understand that I was one of the very few people on board who did not succumb. I even enjoyed my meals and cigars. I cannot understand the prejudice against Mothersill ; it doesn't seem to me to have any ill-effect and it preserves the worst sailor in the world, which I am, from misery and degradation.

Thursday, November 27th. Better to-day, though by no means calm. I got up early and went on deck. I see that Mr. Aspinall in his guide book says that on the third day out from Vigo we are in the tropics. I can only say I haven't noticed it. He also adds that on the fourth day awnings are put out and the ship's officers appear in white uniform. I will look out for both, though avoiding the former. As regards the latter, at present there is nothing to relieve Captain De Jong's " customary suit of solemn black." Fish has always been in white, it is true, but perhaps he is not a ship's officer.

Passed by the Azores this afternoon in foggy weather ; what we saw of them looked attractive—

very rugged and volcanic, the land terraced and cultivated everywhere, and dotted with little white villages. We now start on the long landless run to Havana and I wish the weather prospects were a little more pleasing.

At Vigo we were seduced into buying a quantity



of Spanish Government lottery tickets. The Cuban Consul had a sheaf and was convinced he should win. The prizes are fantastic, many millions of pesetas. Even if I win, I fail to see how I shall ever know it. Also, I fancy one lot of mine are duds, if I rightly interpret the Spanish on the back.

The notices on board are oddly distributed as regards language. Some of the most important are in English, others in English and Spanish, and others in Spanish alone. Also there are some in Dutch.

There was a threatening notice outside the smoking-room to say that "los niños" were not allowed in the *salon a fumar*. As I wanted to take Viola there and have a natural horror of breaking rules, I had to go back and find whether *niños* meant women or babies. It meant babies, of which I must say there are many hundreds on board.

I have got through an enormous amount of mixed reading: *The Forsyte Saga*, a monumental heroic work which gave me untold pleasure and interest; the new Compton Mackenzie, a cheerful, agreeable potboiler; *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Dombey and Son*, both perfect; the new *Life of Robert Louis Stevenson*, rather a portentous work but readable in spite of the moderate writing; *Typee* (perfect); two plays of Galsworthy; *The Seven against Thebes*, and two books of the Odes of Horace. Not a bad lot. I must start now on *Omoo* and *Moby Dick*, and I am bottling up the new Proust till an emergency. I also have with me the Oxford Book, and Mr. Bridge's much underrated anthology, *The Spirit of Man*, so that at Corunna I had two sources to draw on for Mr. Wolfe's poem. In the watches of the night I read Mr. Aspinall's Guide to the West Indies.

The Cuban Consul, with the optimism that is

characteristic of him, has blossomed out into white flannel trousers and brown boots. I shall wait till I see the ship's officers in their white uniforms to play such a trick.



V AND THE CUBAN CONSUL

Friday, November 28th. Saturday, November 29th. Well, here is the fourth and fifth day out and I haven't seen a trace of an awning or of any white uniform except Fish. Can it be that the tropics are an entire myth? It really looks like it: the sun never comes out, and the sea is just like the sea at Brighton, only a good bit rougher. A whole week more of this motion will become a little tedious, and I can't make out why we haven't both of us passed out. I am glad to

see that in the official ship's log, or whatever it is called, the sea is definitely given as "rough."

I have been talking to an old English bore who makes the journey to and from the States several times a year. He says he would always choose a Dutch boat in preference to an English one. Certainly I don't see how one could do better than this ship, except in actual tonnage. I think the old boy was a little influenced by the fact that on the big English boats he had been made to "dress up like a damned waiter," and it had put his eye out a little. But I, too, am not wedded to the "damned waiter" business, especially in doubtful weather, and as the first-class fare is immeasurably cheaper, and as, according to De Jong, we should have our pick of the cabins in February, I think everything points to a return on the good ship the *New Amsterdam*. The food is really remarkable, and it is extraordinary how fresh everything is so far from land.

The meals are enormous, and just as well chosen and cooked as they would be, say, at the Berkeley. ~~Have~~ have a faint longing really to have a go at the breakfast, mutton chops, steaks and all ; but the weather is against it. At dinner there is a thing that I have not seen since the old days at the Clarendon at Oxford

(which boasted the longest dinner menu in the world)—a water-ice, described as a *Ponche* or a *Sorbet*, between the bird and the roast. I like it because I have a passion for this kind of ice as against ice-cream, which I never can eat. Nor, except at the Clarendon, has one had a water-ice since the prehistoric days when one used to go to children's parties in the country, where the choice was always strawberry and vanilla cream and lemon water.

The Cuban Consul has donned national dress in the shape of a dark blue Goya Glengarry. This, with brown boots and white flannels, makes a pretty picture.

A woman gave birth to a child yesterday during one of the rougher moments. Otherwise there is little news.

We are now friends with the Mexican Consul as well as the Cuban variety, so we are well up in the diplomatic world.

This afternoon the sea grew suddenly moderately calm, and a sun of the Cornish Riviera type made its appearance. I live in hopes of the awnings to-morrow. Fish is for the moment irretrievably lost.

There is little room to put nick-nacks in the cabin, so our walls are decorated solely with a likeness of

Miss Jean Eagles taken from the *Tatler*, and most alluring.

Saturday, November 29th. Sunday, November 30th. No news and no events except that we have made friends with Mr. and Mrs. D. F. Hickling of Texas, and also with a man called Pickelherring. I thought at first it must be a joke or a *nom-de-plume*, but it is true—PICKELHERRING. Pickelherring and Hickling win the sweep each day.

It is really getting hotter at last; one can tell from the butter, which shows signs of melting.

The wind prevents one noticing it otherwise. The chief steward gave us a treat last night of caviare and champagne. For some unexplained reason, perhaps a delicate compliment to the Cuban Consul, Hickling



V. AND THE CAPTAIN.

has donned the Goya Glengarry ! Viola is taking daily Spanish lessons from the younger son (aged seven) of the Mexican Consul. His party consists of his wife, his wife's mother, and five children.

All the children on board, and there are many hundreds, look about thirty. They yell and yowl all day, stay up for dinner and fall heavily asleep at the pudding, till they are slapped into life again by their fat, howling mothers. All the Dutch staff (except Fish, who is reticent) come and tell me how much they hate the Spaniards, and how they won't get any tips out of them. I daresay this is partly to see me and raise me, but no doubt their quiet, ordered, mannerly minds revolt at the hilariously noisy behaviour.

We are still very depressed about the apparent non-existence of the tropics, as can be seen from the following article in letter form written by Viola about this time :

" HUNTING FOR TROPICS "

DEAR H.,

You and I (independently; I may say) fought shy of Venice and its lures, and weren't caught by it. Well, when we saw it, it isn't even a bad imitation of what it's made out to be. " It's a rumour,"

as the great comedians say. By now I thought we should be becalmed on an oily orange sea, with iridescent octopuses flopping on to the sides of the ship, "a painted ship upon a painted ocean." Not at all! At least, then, flamingoes screaming through the rigging, a swarm of yellow butterflies faint from flight, and the Southern Cross, like a Cartier jewel, suspended neatly in the sky. My dear, not a bit of it! Good old Southampton to Havre! Everything absolutely grey.

I try to fudge myself about the infinite waste of waters, about the wake of the ship, about the "salt, estranging sea": but when it comes to brass tacks it's water, simple water, and too much of it. The nicest part is that one can stay in bed almost for ever, with slight interruptions for boiling sea baths.

I think this hunting for tropics is perhaps one of the things one needn't do in life, like reading Scott. It's quite certain that you get hot weather once a year even in North Italy, and that's as much as any man can want. But it makes one adore home: it makes one want to stand by a red wall, and look at frosty Michaelmas daisies, and old red admirals (butterflies, not men).

Still, it's a big feather in one's cap to have seen the world. Whoever thought that I, such a homing bird, would see it? I needn't have gone to Wembley!

There are many Spaniards and Cubans on board. The Carmens of life as a national type are fast vanishing. The women are all shingled, sports-dressed, hardly exotic at all: just a copy of English and Americans. The men, too, have lost their danger: their glances under sombreros, about which one has heard so much, are things of the past. They have become second-class copies of Englishmen in the Strand. A few of the older school wear "Goya" caps and gesticulate, but for the most part they are serene as Scotsmen. In the taverns of Havana I hope to do a little better!

We called at Corunna, and had a brief run round. The town was lovely, like all great seaports. The market-place looked Chinese from a distance, its low-roofed, pink-tiled booths, and pigtailed girls selling strange fruits. The colour of the pepper plants and pomegranates was good, and one deplored as usual that they come out black and white in the camera prints.

All the girls from twelve to twenty look exactly

like Hermione Baddeley. Their hair is extremely bobbed to within an inch of the back, where they have a long, thick plait—their chevelure is so magnificent that they cannot part with it all. The matrons become matrons at once, and look like second-rate opera singers as Carmen. An apology for a mantilla lightly covers their greasy, well-dressed hair. From carrying all their property and grocery on their heads in extreme youth, their walk is always magnificent.

The Cuban Consul in London, with whom I have made friends, told me that Spaniards go to Cuba to make a fortune. We took 1,500 on board at Corunna. Well, we aren't seeking our fortune, and no one will ever know we've been away. No one ever does. It's one of the unexplained things. But you and a few more will, at least, welcome one back ?

Yours hopefully,
V.

Monday, December 1st. Tuesday, December 2nd.
The further we go south, the colder and wilder it gets. To-day it is like Margate in March. It is very, very rough, and I can't imagine why we aren't
c

dead instead of sitting up and typing. With me it is Mothersill ; but Viola, after two days of obliteration, has become a regular Jack Tar. Pickelherring has won the sweep again. By way of celebrating the arrival of arctic weather and hurricanes, the ship's officers have now really at last donned their white



" JACK TAR."

uniforms. So far, however, there is no sign of any awning. I suppose we are somewhere near Bermuda, the "still-vexed Bermoothes." They are still as vexed as ever.

The Spanish gentlemen play a kind of poker with special cards that look like "Mr. Bunn the Baker" cards : whenever they deal or play a card they go off into yells and roars of laughter, after which they have

a good spit. They also play dice, and manage to rattle the dice in the box a quite incredible number of times before the throw is effected ; this is also greeted by howls.

Wednesday, December 3rd. It was very rough again last night, but to-day it has calmed down, though there is still nothing tropical noticeable. This afternoon De Jong took us on the bridge and showed us the arcana of the ship. Viola managed to put him some very puzzling queries. I am glad to say that he is still " in inky cloak," and has not adopted the insane fashion of his subordinates in putting on the whites. I took a snap of him.

Thursday, December 4th. Viola is now the accepted pavement artist of the ship and does portraits of the Spanish ladies, surrounded by a crowd eight or ten deep. Pickelherring has again won the sweep.

The food is gradually going bad owing to the efflux of time, and now the sun has at last fitfully come out, I suppose it will go worse. Have skimmed through *David Copperfield* and *Pickwick*. Lent Mrs. Hickling *Pepys*; after long study, she said, " Who is it by ? " I said, " *Pepys* " ; and left her more

mystified than ever. Hickling sported a tuxedo last night, which irritated my old English bore, who grumbled all the evening about "damned waiters."

There is another Englishman who has a truly revolting child of, I suppose, two years old, who is



V DRAWING

always accoutred in an elaborate harness, which is the silliest of all toys.

To-day I watched the steerage being vaccinated ; after the ceremony they all rubbed orange juice into the wound, yelling and spitting the while.

The smoking-room has become a sort of rather select club, which the ruck dare not enter. A great deal of beer is consumed. The chief members besides myself and Hickling are an old Canadian

named Murphy, a coarse and drunken but pleasant youth named Jones, Pickelherring, a Dutch gentleman called Leyden, and a Cuban called Gatch. Jones said to me, "It's a curious thing, but I can't understand a word your wife says. Do you find any difficulty yourself?" When I asked him to play shuffleboard, he said, "I'm sorry, but I promised my fiancée never to play that game."

Friday, December 5th. Saturday, December 6th.
It suddenly all came true about the tropics : brilliant sun, flying fish, white uniforms and all. I can hardly credit it, but it has already made me feel years younger. We passed our first land early Friday morning, Abaco in the Bahamas. Soon after, we caught a glimpse of Nassau in the distance : it seemed sad to have to steam away from it, when a few hours' rowing over that oily, glassy sea would have taken us there.

Friday night we dined with the Hicklings, but it was rather a failure, as we couldn't get to the piano, and our dinner enthusiasm dwindled to a longing for bed. We sighted Cuba early on Saturday morning, and by eleven o'clock we had reached Havana.

The entrance to the harbour, the narrowest, except

Taranto, I have ever seen, was bewilderingly beautiful, and the way we skimmed through with the pink castle of Morro on our left, and the splendid Prado on our right, gave us a real catch at the heart. I looked up Hergesheimer's description in *The Bright Shawl*, which I had with me :



ENTRANCE TO HAVANA HARBOUR

"Then with the sudden drama of a crash of brass, of an abruptly lifting curtain, they swung into Havana harbour. C. was simultaneously amazed by a great many things—the narrowness of the entrance, the crowded ships in what was no more than a rift of the sea, a long pink fortress above him on the left, and the city, Havana itself, immediately before him. His utmost desire was satisfied

by that glimpse. Why, he cried mentally, hadn't he been told that it was a city of white marble? That was the impression it gave him, a miraculous whiteness, a dream city, crowning the shining blue tide.

Every house was hung with balconies on long, shuttered windows, and everywhere were parks and palms, tall palms with smooth, pewter-like trunks, and short palms profusely leaved. Here, then, white and green, was the place of his dedication: he was a little dashed by its size and vigour and brilliancy.

The steamer was hardly moving when the Customs officials came on board, and, as the drift ceased, a swarm of boats like scows with awnings aft clustered about them. Hotel runners clambered up the sides, and in an instant there was a pandemonium of Spanish and disjointed English. A man whose cap bore the sign 'Hotel Telegrafo' clutched at his arm, but he drew sharply away repeating the single word, 'Inglaterra.'"

It took hours to get off, and the whole thing was shockingly mismanaged, but there was no hurry, and it was pleasant in the broiling sun. The luggage

came off piece by piece; each one was taken by a fresh nigger, so that I had six or more nigger porters besides Fish, who had given up the ghost through the heat. In the Customs, they made us open all ten pieces of luggage, but it was all very good-tempered and



HOTEL INGLATERRA, HAVANA

leisurely, and they only had a good laugh when they found carefully concealed tobacco. We finally got a Ford, and drove to the "Inglaterra."

We had been told so many tales of how they would "soak" one that it was a pleasant surprise to find a charming room with a bathroom for eight dollars. I at once ordered the *Daiquiri*, of which I had heard so much. It was brought in a jug, and ex-

ceeded all expectations. Once again I quote Hergesheimer :

"The moment, now, had arrived for a *Daiquiri* ; seated near the cool drip of the fountain, I lingered over the frigid mixture of Ron Bacardi, sugar, and a fresh vivid green lime.

It was a delicate compound, a revelation, and I was devoutly thankful to be sitting at that hour in the Inglaterra, and with such a drink. It elevated my contentment to an even higher pitch ; and, with a detached amusement, I recalled the fact that further north prohibition was formally in effect.

Unquestionably the cocktail on my table was a dangerous agent, for it held, in its shallow glass bowl slightly encrusted with undissolved sugar, the power of a contemptuous indifference to fate : it set the mind free of responsibility, obliterating both memory and to-morrow, it gave the heart an adventitious feeling of superiority, and momentarily vanquished all the celebrated, the eternal fears. . . ."

He was right.

We had a walk on the Prado, and turned into an ice-cream store, where we had our first *agua de coco*.

It was good, though very subtle, and for me slightly spoilt by my not knowing how to deal with a small sugar-cane wrapped in tissue paper which accompanied it. The Prado is a noble street, and all the women in it seem to be lovely and beautifully dressed. I then sat over a *Daiquiri* with my old English bore and Pickelherring at the hotel. Then the Hicklings arrived and we had a very pleasant experimental dinner at the Cosmopolita. I had soft-shelled crab, which was like chips of wood wrapped in batter. The hard-shelled Morro crab, however, was excellent.

We were accosted at dinner by a lady of great beauty and little modesty or reticence who wished to, and did, sell us a flag. Hickling and I carried it off, as I thought, finely, but Mrs. H. looked rather wistful.

Afterwards we went to the Sevilla, the place where it is generally agreed one is "soaked," to have a pineapple drink Hickling had discovered. His language is enchanting. Every time I show him a photograph, he says, "I'll say it's a dandy." Last night he spoke a great deal of chipmunks.

We bought a ripe coco-nut, which we tried to open in the middle of the night with nail-scissors. Hopelessly failing, and hearing that no one ever went to

bed here, we telephoned for an orangeade, and up it came.

Sunday, December 7th. Monday, December 8th.
Mooched about the town all the morning, and had a fruit drink or two. Lunched, not too well, at the



FLAMINGOES IN A VEDADO GARDEN

hotel, again off Morro crab and a bottle of Spanish wine. In the afternoon took a taxi down to the Malecon, and sat about in the lovely sun. The Hicklings called for us at five, and took us for a long drive ; we started along the Malecon, which looked quite lovely in the sunset, and then to the Vedado, a residential suburb of the rich Cubans. It is all quite new : mile after mile of low, white or

blue or green houses in broad avenues, covered with hibiscus and bougainvillea, the whole thing fantastically beautiful in the evening light. We tried to make the Country Club, but owing to the hundreds of cars on the road (there is only one horse in Cuba) we turned back to the Hicklings' hotel, the Cecil, where he had ordered us a nice dinner, crab cocktail and guineafowl.

After dinner I walked out with Hickling and peeped into some of these rich houses at the families at dinner, all very much dressed up, and waited on by quiet, coloured servants. Hickling worked himself up into a great state about a tree which he said had the largest spread of any tree he had ever seen: it was in fact about the size of a moderate yew. He leapt on to the railings of its house and said, with a low bow to a lady sitting in the porch, "Excuse me, madam, but can you tell me the name of your big tree?" The lady of course spoke no English, and intimated as much. H. then returned to the charge with "Excuse me, madam, but can you tell me the name of your *grande* tree?"

Yesterday (Monday) morning, Viola made herself known to Doctor Lainé, who brought Ivan¹ into the world, while I went to the bank to get some money.

¹My nephew, Ivan Moffat.

I then went to the Shipping Companies, and found that there were no direct sailings to Nassau, and that the shipping agents had hashed it all badly. The only way is via Key West and Miami, and on that adventure we must, I suppose, start to-morrow.

I also had a great failure at the American Consulate, where they were incredibly tiresome about visa-ing our passports. They wanted a letter from someone in Havana who knew us well, a typical Government requirement. However, we got a letter from our friend of five minutes, Dr. Lainé, which seemed to satisfy them. While I was doing this, Viola had fallen in with the most charming nigger chauffeur, a Jamaican gentleman called Larry Mullins. He spoke like an O. Henry story ; he said, " You've been handicapped all through till you met me " ; as we passed his garage he said, " That's where I locate the buggy," and when we told him to come round at ten, " That sounds good to me."

We lunched with the Hicklings at the Sevilla, well, off red snapper and heart of palm salad, with a Mary Pickford cocktail. After lunch, we took an expedition into rural Cuba, with a roaring chauffeur guide from Detroit, who continually forcibly dismounted us to drink beer at a brewery, or try a ripe coco-nut.

We saw tobacco, sugar and banana plantations, and some marvellous palms and bamboos. We got back about six in a flaming sunset, after a very pleasant afternoon. Mrs. Hickling likes to compare everything with Texas. Hickling, when appealed to to endorse one of these comparisons, says, "Well, Mo, I didn't quite figure it out that way myself."

In the evening Viola and I dined quietly at the Telegrafo off crawfish and pigs' trotters, and sat out in the Central Park before an early bed.

Tuesday, December 9th. Spent most of the morning going through interminable formalities at the American Consul's office, also at the Shipping Company's office, trying to get my ticket to Miami. I always lacked something and had to go back and fetch it. However, finally I managed to get the visa and the ticket. The visa cost twenty dollars plus sixteen dollars head tax ! Finally, Viola and I and the Hicklings drove off in Larry Mullins's car to Morro Castle, where Larry proved a wonderfully accomplished guide not only of the sights, but also of the live stock, which included a mass of iguanas sunning themselves, and a couple of chameleons which performed superbly when chased from a brown to a green leaf. On the way back we

were held up for a time by the Cuban army, with whom we fraternized as far as the language bar allowed us.

We lunched well at the Dos Hermanos Restaurant, off a local fish wrapped in paper, and a bottle of Spanish wine. We had heard a great deal about this restaurant, which looks over the harbour, and it quite came up



HAVANA RACE COURSE.

to the Cuban Consul's description. At three we had a date with Mrs. Lainé ; she took us in her car for a very long drive, a little too long for me, as I was itching to get to the races. However, she wanted to show us the Yacht Club, which is one of the very smart Havana clubs, but it wasn't yet officially opened, so there was little to see, and owing to her inability to make her own chauffeur understand that we wanted

to go to the *Hippodrome*, we were only just in time for the last race, which was about to start.

We seized a race-card, and Viola chose "Master-Hand : No. 5." I found a wandering tout and invested two dollars to win, and two a place. When the horses appeared the Master looked very tired and jaded, and had a peculiar kind of napkin round his snout. He settled down to eat grass, and was last off the mark ; he was last all the way round the first half of the course ; he then suddenly made an amazing spurt and romped home first. We won four dollars and sixty cents : I feel it should have been more.

Mrs. Lainé then drove us to the Country Club, a fairy place on the greenest golf links I have ever seen (so green that it looked like table golf) with white-clothed nigger servants gliding round a huge shining swimming-pool. It all looked lovely in the sunset, and though I don't think the links quite lived up to the Detroit chauffeur's description of them as the finest eighteen holes in the world, still, they looked so green and inviting that I longed to be at it again. What a place in which to spend the winter !

We got home late, and Viola dressed herself in her mauve Molyneux to dine with the Hicklings on the roof-garden at the Sevilla. She unfortunately spilled

a helping of snapper down it early in the evening, which, I fear, dashed things for her a little. I was entranced with the view of Havana, all lit up, from the roof-garden.

Then we went off to see the *Jai-alai* (Pelota) game played. This was the most thrilling experience; *jai-alai* is the hardest game I have ever seen played, the hardest and fastest, except, perhaps, first-class racquets. The skill of the players was amazing, and the audience keep up a perfect babel of sound the whole time, while a mass of bookies in red tam-o'-shanters yell the odds, and take bets not only on the result of the game, but apparently on the result of every rally. On the first game we won five dollars by backing the whites against the blues; in the second game, which was an all against all variation, I supported a gentleman called Marcellino, who made no attempt to support me. The third game was the great game: I was for supporting the blues, as I had noted the amazing form of one of the blues in the all against all game, but Viola insisted against my judgment in backing the whites because the other blue was fat and ungainly, and in the second game had been the butt of the crowd. He turned out to be a superb player, though still remaining the butt of the audience

when he missed, and the blues won easily by thirty to twenty-three. So our winnings were turned into losses. On our return Viola wrote the following article on the game :

THE HARDEST GAME OF ALL

The national Spanish game of Pelota, as played in Cuba under the name of *jai-alai*, is certainly one to thrill the English, the same thrill that I imagine a bull-fight possesses without the cruelty that shocks "Britishers."

Here, Mr. Cochran, is a game "made to your hand." An Eton and Oxford man told me that it was the hardest and fastest game he had ever seen, harder and faster than even racquets or real tennis. The game is played in a court about the size of the Piccadilly grill-room : actually it is 210 feet long by 16 feet broad—three sides of a parallelogram ; the fourth wall is, of course, the auditorium. The players can be two, four, or six in number ; they carry a banana-shaped basket about a yard long, strapped tightly to their right hand. This makes the subtlety of the stroke tremendous ; the ball can be whirled in its basket, and then let fly as from a sling, or taken at half-volley (a very difficult stroke),

or it can be scraped off the side wall as one catches a wasp from a window.

As you buy your ticket outside you hear a sound like hell let loose : this is the audience taking and giving bets, and snarling, hooting, or cheering at the players, according to the issue of their bets. Most of the noise is made by the "bookies" in red tam-o'-shanters, who yell the odds and change them bewilderingly at the end of each rally. The place was full, and there were only two women there beside our party. That is not to be wondered at, as the Cuban women are kept for their beauty, not as companions.

We were right in the front row. Two amazing-looking men, like Henry Ainley, but six feet two inches in height, the obvious favourites of the crowd, were having a kind of "knock-up," really showing off in order to win followers. Then a Tweedledum man came on the scene dressed in a blue shirt (the others were in white shirts) : he made ridiculous shots, and then made faces at his basket, as much as to say, "I told you so." However, he was, it turned out, a very fine player, and cost several of our party money who had betted against him because he was "fat and scant of breath."

Suddenly the game began—white shirts against blue shirts. One of the Henry Ainleys in a blue shirt served with venom, spleen, and vim, hurling himself down the court after the ball, then tip-toeing back with boomerang swiftness to be ready for the return. What a game ! At an unusually long rally, ending with groans on one side and yells on the other, one's heart rose into one's mouth. It was beautiful to see the catlike movements of the players, never sparing themselves for an instant in those long sets, their shirts wet to the skin, and their hair dripping into their eyes.

One of the white shirts fell each time he hit the ball, so great was the rebound from the stroke. It seemed his method, for he was always on his feet again in time—but I think it tired him, for he didn't seem up to the form of the others. When a ball was badly missed and the crowd hooted, the younger players appeared to, or did actually, shake with sobs, their faces to the wall. Tweedledum merely glared at his basket.

I don't wonder ! Their lives must be short and gay, so they must laugh and weep as often as they can. Their salaries are from £2,000 to £3,000 a year. What a game ! What a people ! If it

comes to England the audience should be composed largely of Spaniards or Cubans, or they must be engaged as supers to egg on the English, who as spectators never break down their reserve, bless their hearts (as we of the stage know to our cost).

A few enthusiasts from the gallery, a few boocers from the pit, do not make a whole audience, and though a football crowd may cheer it is only because it is out of doors, and thinks it can't be heard. What we want audiences to do is to "throw up their sweaty nightcaps, clap their chopp'd hands, and utter such a deal of stinking breath that it almost choked Cæsar. . . ."

That is what happens at *jai-alai*.

Hickling worked himself up into a high state of excitement and continually turned round to the Spanish-speaking crowd to enquire: "Say, boy, wasn't that a dandy shot?" They seemed pleased by his enthusiasm as one might be by a small boy's. Mrs. H. created a slight diversion by receiving a ball in the small of her back and being brought back to life by draughts of ice-water.

After the game we said good-bye to them with real regret. He was a generous soul with the heart

of a child, and they both took a real fancy to us. Sometimes, as when they spoke of chipmunks, they were adorable. I suppose we shall never meet again, for somehow I feel I shall never make Texas, though with typical American hospitality they have overwhelmed us with invitations to go there instead of to Nassau.

We were sad at the thought of leaving Havana, for it had been a wonderfully enjoyable little visit. But our finances could not have stood another day in what must veritably be the most expensive city in the world. Our bill for "shoe-shines" at the hotel alone was four dollars! Havana has made a lasting impression on us both: the beauty, the indolence and the wealth of it all; we both agreed that if we won the Spanish lot-




V ON THE PRADO

tery, our first purchase would be a house in the Vedado.

In spite of the quantity of Americans, very little else but Spanish seemed to be spoken, but in the hotels, of course, English will carry one along. The noble stretch of the Prado, the huge Sevilla Hotel,¹ the beauties of the Vedado, Larry Mullins, the Daiquiris, are memories that will always remain with me. Viola was even a greater enthusiast than I, as the following article will show :

A LIVING FAIRY TALE

People have been unfair about Havana ; they have wished to conceal it, to keep it from one, or they have been ashamed to confess their fondness for it. Havana, except that it gives its title to its cigars, has been only a name. One had expected the little circular bay of white houses of all seaports abroad. The Cubans on the ship had said it was a fine town, as an inhabitant of Scarborough might boast of that, but when they came on deck on the morning of arrival in beautifully-cut clothes, black satins, pearls, close-fitting hats, one had to confess one was impressed.

¹ It seemed to me the highest building in the world. Up to then I had seen nothing higher. It was a trifle of some fourteen storeys! 

The Cubans were proud, their children were exquisitely dressed, shingled, polished, with coats and shoes new for arrival. One was shamed as one thought of one's tweeds and the hasty powdering one gives one's own nose on Waterloo Bridge or Victoria, the donning of old gloves, the children's tumbled cotton frocks, Banbury cakes and butter-cups.

One saw the Cubans having spent hours in an uncomfortable cabin, making themselves so tidy ; not only tidy, lovely, in gala clothes as for a wedding. Was it to impress their fellow-travellers ? No, for the steerage passengers had tried their best, too ; they had combed, oiled and twined their beautiful hair and put on light dresses in Futurist—no, Cubist—colours !

What was it all about, this triumphal entry ? The greyish-green unbroken line of the plantations to the south of us was the only indication of our being near journey's end. Suddenly a terrifically high wireless post proclaimed a change, the ship marked time, the pilot boat hailed her ; we turned away bored, to refill our cameras in the writing-room out of the sun.

We went on deck again—a miracle ! “ Round

the cape of a sudden came"—the town ! Rather a world as far as eye could see, miles upon miles of arches broken by squares set with palm trees. What had sounded so dry in the guide books—"a very fine natural harbour"—was the narrow passage into this new world. On the left the pink low sixteenth-century fortress walls, on the right the modern arcades and public buildings—sky-scrapers, some of them, but the effect caught at one's heart. No wonder a shout was raised and that all the people clapped their hands.

This is where Columbus's men must have knelt, one imagines, for even then it must have looked incredible. Launches crept out from all sides, in them the brothers, sisters and sweethearts of the home-coming beauties. And they carried on conversations of the most intimate kind in high Spanish voices, their boats colliding every moment with other craft or with our ship herself.

We were almost the last to leave the ship, having no particular plans or desires. All we came for was the sun, in which we have never really believed. Here was December, and everywhere straw hats, avenues of green poplars, roses and camelias in

the squares, winter apparently a figment of one's brain.

But this *is* their winter, we said to one another. What can the people be like, what effect does it have on their brains and hearts, never to know cold or mist or dripping eaves? The effect on the officials of the hotel on the big square was to make them morose and unsurprised. One felt they had indifferent eyes, but one suspected knives in their hip pockets. The head hotel manager was like Scarpia in *La Tosca*; one felt he would torture one's lover easily while he fanned himself with one's fan. One revolted against the race; he was too calm, too rich, too satisfied, too certain—but when one had put on such best clothes and shoes as one could find, and drove down the Prado, a wide street with a shaded garden walk down the middle, one sympathized with his indifference, his indolence, his supercilious certainty.

There is nothing in the world these people have not got. Their lives are like the summing-up of a conventional fairy tale . . . " and he wished, and a beautiful palace sprang up at his feet, with gardens, fountains and singing birds; and on the steps stood a beautiful princess with almond eyes,

who led him to a table spread with sweetmeats and wine ; and they were married with great pomp and ceremony, and lived happily ever after."

It is all as unreal as that . . . a Babylon over again. What jewels ! What food ! What nectar ! And yet . . . and yet . . .

Wednesday, December 10th. Spent a feverish hour searching for Larry Mullins ; finally "located his buggy", and got him to drive us to the dock. There we found the s.s. *Miami*, a real dinghy which, the minute she got out of harbour, showed in no uncertain way how she meant to behave. I rushed below and took Mothersill. It saved me, but I was not able to follow out the directions on the label : "Get up and enjoy life." It was, in fact, hell, and seven hours of it ! We lay prostrate and Viola, I fear, was unable to share my excitement when the journey was nearly done, over the first sight of Key West (and incidentally America). In fact, she suffered the supreme humiliation of nausea in the harbour.

PART II
FLORIDA

FLORIDA

Wednesday, December 10th (continued). So, for the first time, we set foot on American soil. The train was drawn up by the quayside, and my first thrill was on seeing the white-coated darkies standing outside the long rows of Pullman cars. Hundreds of American films, long ago forgotten, rushed back to my mind. We were herded into the Customs House, the heat of which was stifling, and the smell like an abattoir.

I did not dare approach the inspectors until they spoke to me, so wandered about reading the notices pinned on the wall. One of them said that the possession of liquor, no matter how small a quantity, rendered the holder liable to a heavy fine and even imprisonment. My heart sank into my boots as I remembered my silver flask of brandy in my despatch case ; the next hour was one of abject apprehension. I watched the searching of the baggage of an American woman who was trying to remain jaunty and cheerful, but was really very near tears. Every drawer in her "innovation" was pulled out and ransacked ; sachets

were turned out, pockets were searched, and the whole of her belongings finally left in chaos on the floor of the shed.

At last my turn came ; I owned up at once like a private-school boy, " Please, sir, I've got a little brandy." " It will have to go," was the reply. It seemed hard, but better than a fine or imprisonment. " Oh, yes, sir ; of course, sir." I produced the flask ; he twisted it contemptuously in his hand, and flung it back into the despatch box, snapping out, but with a charming twinkle in his eye, the single word : " medicine ! "

After that everything was excitement. I had always been one of those people who can while away hours gazing at the atlas, and nothing had ever so stimulated my interest as the little black line zigzagging across the open sea which stood for the Key West railroad. I could hardly believe that not only had I at last found America, but that of all the places in that vast continent I had chosen Key West at which to arrive.

By the time the train started it was pitch dark, but I was determined to see all I could. I flattened my face against the window, which was covered with a thick wire netting, and I fear the chief result was

that my face became grotesquely criss-crossed with lines of sooty black.

There was, indeed, little to be seen : stretches of open sea and an occasional waving palm tree on the Cays.

My reverie was cut short by the arrival of a train official who had, no doubt, spotted me as a gullible alien owing to my antics, and who attempted to persuade me to buy a Spanish mantilla. I did not wish to do so and, in my embarrassment, wishing to appear at my ease, I lit a cigar. This was the signal for a mild riot, and I was ignominiously led to a compartment of whose existence I was unaware and threateningly entitled "Men." I found a mixture of smoking-room and lavatory, tenanted by a single gentleman occupying the seat I so greatly coveted next the window. I did not dare disturb him, and I was too cowardly to extinguish my cigar and return to my own window-seat with the possibility of fresh horrors in the way of mantillas.

After ten minutes' silence my companion asked me whether I could tell him the best hotel in Miami. I told him meekly that I had only been one hour in the States, and was treated to that charmingly incredulous "Is zat so?" which never fails to fascinate me.

My friend turned out to be a high official of the American Express Company, and I had visions of him as an influential cicerone. He delighted in my ignorance and helplessness, and showered cards and addresses on me. Among other things he told me that the best trains in the world were those plying between Liverpool and London. I could not but be flattered, but somehow the compliment served to damp my ardour and my expectation. I wanted him to tell me that the Key West-Miami express was the nonpareil amongst trains.

I left him and had my first meal in an American dining car, where the full horror of the choice of Poland water or coffee as dinner drinks first struck me.

When we got back to the car we found it magically transformed for the night. Arnold Bennett says that he could never imagine anything "so appalling as the confined, stifling, malodorous promiscuity of the American sleeping car, where men and women are herded together on shelves," and that "in no European prison would such a system be tolerated, even by hardened warders and governors." My mood, however, was still one of childish expectancy, and I was entranced by my own little electric light, my watch-

pocket, and all the other little devices, and even enjoyed undressing in the full glare of publicity.

I fell to bed but could not sleep. Not only was I afraid of missing things outside, but on my right was a gentleman whose snores drowned the engine, and opposite me was a child with whooping-cough.

Thursday, December 11th. Drove early to the Hotel McAllister, where we had a fine bath and breakfast of panfish and corned beef hash. I could not help repeating over and over to myself: "You thought you would never see America, but you are there, there, there!"

Hardly had we unpacked when the telephone rang and the *Miami News* answered to say that they wanted an interview. Viola went down and saw the reporter, thinking, of course, that they had already found out who she was. Not so! What he said he wanted to find out was the reason for the great influx of English into Miami. When we asked how many there had been, he said "Quite three or four in the last three months." However, the interview when it came out was quite nice. Its headlines were: "British Woman Playwright sees Miami Future

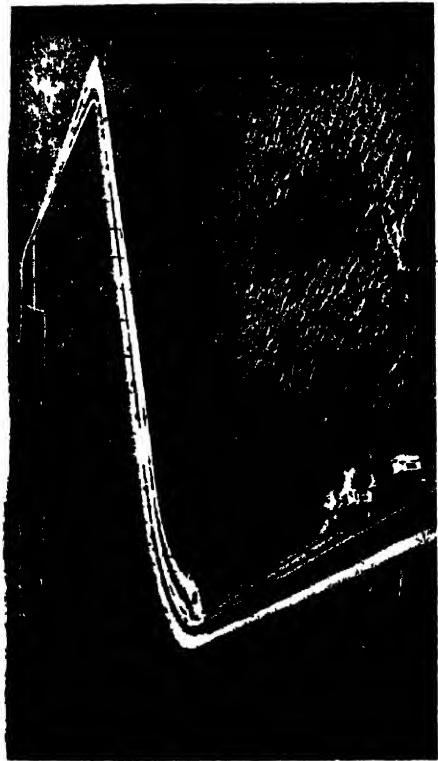
Riviera," "Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree's daughter finds joy in nations' contrasts."

Later we went down by tram to Miami beach, a sort of Lido, formed like the Lido on a breakwater, and joined to Miami town by a "million-dollar" causeway up and down which motors career all day at enormous speed. When one gets over the Clacton-on-Sea effect one realizes that it is really very beautiful, with patches of extreme hideosity, just like Venice and the Lido, and at night when all the lights are out, and the great dome of the Flamingo Hotel on Miami beach changes from white to green and red, it is fantastically lovely.

I was tempted to bathe, and actually immersed myself for two minutes, lured by Viola's usual remark that it was "boiling." It wasn't boiling, but it was nice to come out and get into the sun after it.

We lunched at a place on the beach which, judging from the looks of Madame who ran it and the winks of the solitary waiter, was no better than it should be. However, we got for a dollar a bottle of real German beer which made up for the screeching of a rasping gramophone.

In the afternoon we looked over some "apartment houses" with the idea of giving up Nassau for the



THE "MILLION DOLLAR" CAUSEWAY CONNECTING MIAMI AND MIAMI BEACH

present and staying here. We finally settled on one kept by two sisters whom we call Zita and Baby.¹ One bears the remotest resemblance to Zita after a bad taxi smash, but heaven knows it is hard lines on Baby. Baby is quite deaf, except when she hears the word "dollar", to which word only her ear is attuned. We have a sitting-room, bed-room, bath-room and "kitchenette," and all for thirty dollars a week. Considering this is supposed to be one of the "resorts" where one is "soaked," it isn't really so bad.

In the evening we dined well, if somewhat drearily, with my American Express friend, at the McAllister in Miami. After dinner we sat outside and listened to the band, and I had my first experience of the "Star-Spangled Banner" sung in chorus, which greatly moved me.

Friday, December 12th. Started early in a taxi for our new home. Bought some eggs and fruit at once and breakfasted. In the morning did our marketing, which consisted mostly of exotic fruits.

Viola bathed in the afternoon and in the evening we went into Miami and bought Boston beans and

¹ After Zita and Baby Jungman, the two beautiful daughters of Mrs. Richard Guinness.

cheese for our dinner. The simple life has begun.

Saturday, December 13th. Did a simple life breakfast and lunch of fruit, etc.

Started at one for the offices of the *Miami News*, where the editor had kindly appointed his Mr. Perry to take us to the golf at Hi-a-leah in his car.

We joined a threesome of Abe Mitchell, Leo Deigel (Hollywood) and Bob Cruikshank (Tampa) at the third hole, and I followed manfully to the end, it being of course far my longest walk since June. It was very thrilling so far as the quality of the golf was concerned, though the course itself was none too good. Mitchell did a quiet 68, so quiet that one hardly noticed that it was being done. He only made two bad shots and neither of them mattered.

It was a good sporting crowd that applauded him as much as the others. Certainly it was the finest round of golf I have ever seen played. It made one feel patriotic, but a little homesick.

Among the crowd were three Seminole Indians. Mr. Perry informed us that these were the only Indians who had never made a treaty with the United States. There are only seven hundred left now, and are only

found in Florida and Georgia. One was dressed in a nightgown trimmed with the Zingari colours ; the other two were in coats and skirts of many colours, and all sported straw hats. Their chief industry is alligator raising. It is interesting to see that they



SEMINOLE INDIANS

are objects of universal respect, a very different thing from the negro.

The climate is being a trifle disappointing ; it is nothing like what we had in Havana and we are only about two hundred miles north. Of course, it is not cold, but to-day has been overcast. To-night, however, it is very still and beautiful and there was the most gorgeous flaming sunset. No news yet of Palm

Beach, and Nassau seems to fade farther and farther away.

Sunday, December 14th. With reference to the last entry, I read to-day in my *Miami Herald* of blizzards in Michigan and Cleveland and see pictures of Kansas City wrapped in snow. I further read that this is so all over America except Florida, and as to-day has been a hot July day of unbroken sunshine, in the course of which I have managed to get brown, I must not complain.

We have spent a very peaceful day on the beach. Early we did a little marketing, buying a fine pompano fish, and some shrimps which were each about the size of a small lobster. These I cooked myself for lunch and they "were voted" a great success. I had a great failure trying to make a hard-boiled egg, which I boiled and boiled and finally bravely split into the salad only to find it was lightly poached.

To-night Viola cooked the pompano and, except for the appalling stench it set up, it was her best effort. Otherwise she is apt to do what we call a "Harold Lloyd" in the kitchen (kitchenette), and I hear cries of agony as she drops an egg, usually the last one, on the floor, or scalds her hand or bumps her head,

or mistakes salt for sugar. I make exquisite salads in which I try various experiments, such as pepper plants, Florida oranges, pecan nuts, etc., and get very much offended if they are not appreciated, and the lettuce is gingerly picked out.

We tried some "soft" drinks to-day, notably a concoction called Grapo or some such name; then some stuff called Coca-Kola, which I had tasted before on the tenth tee at St. Andrews; the taste of it took me back with a jump to 1908.

Our Lord turned water into wine; why this nation think they know better and turn it into these abominable creations, I cannot see. It must be bad for the stomach, as also must be the portentous draughts of ice water one pours down one's fevered gullet. They say the dry and buoyant air of the States takes away all desire for alcohol. I haven't noticed it yet. Milk, I think, is the best, but I can't get wedded to milk as a dinner drink, and it kind of makes me tired.

Our Darkie's name is Sarah; she might be any age between twenty-three and forty-five; she is the colour of a penny, rather fat, and her walk is regulated by a pair of sandals so decrepit that they are always on the verge of dissolution. She sails in every morning without any preliminary announcement, usually

at the moments when her presence is most embarrassing. She is mainly interested in what she calls the "garbage pail," and when she has collected all the garbage pails together outside, she plays a kind of draughts with them. She has a row of glistening white teeth ; very little of what she says is intelligible ; very little of what we say is intelligible to her. In her gala dress of a Harrow straw hat and a lilac print dress, she presents an amazing figure.

We have already got into trouble with the neighbours, a real reminder of home, the people below having registered their complaint that our ice box has overflowed through their ceiling. This box, by the way, is a hold-all : to-day it held the milk, the celery, the ice water, the shrimps, the pompano, the butter, some jam, a piece of ham, and some sausage. Every item takes on something of the smell of its neighbour. To-day the shrimps won easily.

Viola, after running several miles, has captured four butterflies to my everlasting chagrin and shame, and the amazement of the denizens. She says they are for the children, but I know better. These already mangled corpses lie in what is termed the jewel box, among a mass of safety pins.

Monday, December 15th. We have discovered the way to get free automobile trips round the country. We present ourselves at one of the countless "real estate" offices, not, it is true, as prospective buyers of land, but as possessors of influential friends looking out for the chance of a profitable investment in land



V CHASING BUTTERFLIES

The thing is done : a car is put at our disposal, and we are whirled off to Coral Gables, or Coconut Grove or Golden Beach, or whatever it may be.

Having made friends with a perspiring but pleasant gentleman called Mader, we were put by him into the largest coral-coloured car I have ever seen and sent off to Coral Gables.

We stopped at the offices on Flagler Street (which is Piccadilly) and picked up an unobtrusive gentleman, looking rather like Joe Coyne. No sooner had we started than he suddenly turned round and yelled "This is Flagler Street." It was quite evident that it was (Flagler Street is some three miles long), so we merely looked sheepish. Then we picked up some more American sightseers, and the sham Coyne warmed to his work. He not only pointed out, or rather bellowed out, every house (or "home" as they call them here), but every bush, tree or shrub. The Americans listened with perfect phlegm : I couldn't help wondering how English tourists in England would behave if a gentleman sat on the front seat and yelled "That is a dandelion," or "that is an unusually large buttercup."

However, it was meat and drink to us, and we made private friends with him, so much so that he stopped yelling for a moment and said to us in a hoarse undertone : "That is the beautiful home of Mr. Luden who made the five-cent cough drop."

Arrived at the boundaries of Coral Gables, we were herded into a palatial lecture room where a gentleman, a very charming and persuasive gentleman, called Brown, actually delivered us a twenty-minute lecture

on the beauties of Coral Gables. Some of the more potent inducements were a little hazy to us, such as "And when I tell you that Mr. Josiah R. Bowman has elected to make his home here . . . etc., etc."

At the end, and when we thought we were closeted there for ever, he said : " Some of our representatives will now have the pleasure of showing you Coral Gables in their private cars." At this a door was flung open and five or six public school men trooped in. Our names were called out as at absence at Eton, and we were handed over to the most charming of men (and perhaps the worst driver of a car) called McIntyre.

Round and round Coral Gables we went, hour after hour after hour. It was rather wonderful : patches of Wembley, tracts of Sunningdale, varied by tropical beauties . . . hibiscus, bougainvillea everywhere. Acres and acres of grape-fruit growing unheeded, and the fruit rotting on the floor . . . hotels of gigantic size in the making and thousands of niggers working on them, golf courses literally growing out of nothing while you watched, and the sea, because it did not happen to be there naturally, coaxed in by vast dredgers. . . . There were Casinos, Country

Clubs, "Venetian" swimming-pools, all practically constructed during the night. . . .

When the tour was finally over we were recloseted with Mr. Brown, who used all his most persuasive powers to induce us to buy a lot. They finally gave me up as a bad job and took me off to buy a bottle of gin.

Armed with our gin, we were driven all the way home by Mr. McIntyre and almost lost our lives by his driving straight into a large lorry. So ended an amusing if tiring day, but the gin was heaven after so much ice water.

Tuesday, December 16th. We tried the same trick on again, this time with another section called "Golden Beach." It was a much less pretentious affair: two noisy but agreeable gentlemen called Messrs. Lanz and Anderson drove us out and discoursed in rivalry on the beauties of the property on the way. Our only other companion was an English gentleman called Bell, said to be a golf professional (he looked most unlike one), who had some secret sorrow. He would lean back and say: "Last year I bought that strip of land for 3,000 dollars; yesterday I was offered 7,000." But the contemplation seemed only to fill him with deep melancholy.

We arrived at Golden Beach, which, unlike Coral Gables, is only one and a quarter miles long and all on the ocean front. At present it is the usual wilderness, but they have planted young coco-nut trees and laid out "boulevards," and soon, I suppose, it will be a small city. They have made ingenious use of the Canal and have in their amazing way thrown up three artificial islands! It will be a sort of rather awful Maidenhead on the sea. Here, too, all the lots are selling and re-selling at an amazing rate.

Mr. Bell flung himself on a bench and gave rein to his gloom. Mr. Lanz gave me up quickly as a buyer and spent the rest of the afternoon telling me what a dog he was and what a quantity of drink he could get me. I promised to call on him if necessary

PRICE LIST

CENTRAL UNIT
GOLDEN BEACH

BLOCK 1 ISLAND NO 1

Lots 1 and 25 each	\$3 600 00
Lots 2 to 10 inclusive each	\$ 000 00
Lots 11 to 15 inclusive each	\$ 250 00
Lots 16 to 24 inclusive each	\$ 000 00

BLOCK 2 ISLAND NO 2

Lots 1 and 25 each	\$ 600 00
Lots 2 to 10 inclusive each	\$ 000 00
Lots 11 to 15 inclusive each	\$ 250 00
Lots 16 to 24 inclusive each	\$ 000 00

BLOCK 3

Lots 21 and 40 each	\$ 200 00
Lots 22 to 39 inclusive each	\$ 1750 00

BLOCK 4

Lots 21 and 40 each	\$ 200 00
Lots 22 to 39 inclusive each	\$ 1750 00

BLOCK "F"

Lots 26 and 27 each	\$ 000 00
Lots 28 to 30 inclusive each	\$ 000 00
Lots 31 to 39 inclusive each	\$ 750 00
Lots 40 to 50 inclusive each	\$ 000 00
Lot 51	\$ 250 00

BLOCK "G"

Lots 22 and 29 each	\$ 000 00
Lots 30 to 32 inclusive each	\$ 000 00
Lots 33 to 41 inclusive each	\$ 700 00
Lots 42 to 52 inclusive each	\$ 000 00
Lot 53	\$ 250 00

Terms 25% down balance in six equal semi-annual payments evidenced by notes bearing 7% interest

Discounts 10% off if all cash at time of purchase 10% off of each part of final payments as may be anticipated within 30 days from date of purchase status of intermediate payments to remain unchanged

All corner lots to be sold only in combination with the adjoining inside or lots.

All lots subject to prior sale, and subject to withdrawal or advance in price at any time and without notice.

This supersedes all previous price lists.

June 12 1924

but I think Mr. McIntyre is a more satisfactory bootlegger.

Wednesday, December 17th. We have tried a "quick-service" meal. It is most attractive. You take a tray, knife and fork, stand in a queue, seize any food you fancy, present yourself at the desk with the loaded tray and pay, and then stagger back to your table.

I do not understand about the American women : here every other woman in the street, and especially in the stores, is quite lovely and they all seem quite unconscious of it. The girl in the drug store on Flagler Street would have made a sensation if dressed up and taken into the Embassy Club. She was entirely unaffected, wholly independent and rather cruelly callous as to our helplessness. The men, on the other hand, seem much more like each other than Chinamen. It may be the horned spectacles that do it, but one can't tell them apart.

Another curious thing is the American language. I have been at great pains to be precise in these matters, and have watched my "sidewalks" and "mails" and "tamayters." But one is often oddly caught out. After having twisted my tongue round "Pam"

Beach, my companion promptly referred to "Parm" Beach, and when I ordered a "chick'n" in the grocery store, the man repeated "chickin" in the best Oxford voice. I am only waiting to be corrected to "house agent" when I produce my "real estate man" (or still worse "realtor").

As there was only one horse in Cuba, so there are none in Miami (or in America, so far as I know). This sounds like a joke, but it is literally true. The traffic, of which there is a vast amount, is entirely machine-drawn, and as a consequence it is very fast. Our slow-moving horse-drawn waggons which clutter up the London streets are really prehistoric.

Last night we were venturesome enough to go and dine at a place on Miami Beach called Billy's Grill, where Mr. Lanz had informed me any drink could be got. Sure enough it was so ; there was no concealment about it and every kind of drink, even Chianti (in wicker flasks) was served quite openly. I left the restaurant with a parcel under my arm which figured in the bill as "One Bottle Soda." Most expensive soda !

The weather is still hot in spite of the blizzards raging in other parts of the States, but the sea is rough and we cannot make up our minds whether to risk



V SHUT OUT FROM THE BAND-STAND, MIAMI BEACH

the 150 miles dash across to Nassau in a tiny yacht. Of course, 150 miles is nothing . . . from London to Brancaster . . . but it is a journey a great deal dearer and a great deal more precarious.

Thursday, December 18th. Friday, December 19th. I have a letter from Diana¹ abusing me for staying at the American Margate. Margate it may be, but yesterday its lowest temperature was seventy-two, which was the highest in the States, and when one reads of blizzards, etc., even in Texas, one can put up with a lot of Margate (a notoriously cold spot). To-night it is so hot that it is hard to type this even at the open window.

However, we had already made up our minds to make a dash for Nassau, having received a most pressing letter from Her Excellency. So we are off on a fresh adventure on Monday and this time it will, I fear, mean a real tossing on the sea. We have had fun here trotting between Miami and Miami Beach, as between Venice and the Lido. And our free motor rides on real estate business have been a roar.

On this quest we made a new friend called Mr. Leonard who, to-day, called to take us to Hollywood-on-Sea in a superb Rolls-Royce. He was a pleasant

¹ Lady Diana Cooper.

but not exactly a lovable gentleman. He was addicted to that special form of spitting which entails a shaking of the whole system, combined with a crescendo of sound that is amazing. He spent so much time lighting and relighting the stub of a cigar that I gave him a fine Corona. No one can describe the result : such a gargling as was never known !

We drove to Hollywood at express speed while he discoursed, as usual, on the advantages and beauties of the property. Arrived there, we drove round and found the usual city growing out of a swamp, to which we are getting so accustomed. We were then herded mysteriously into a barn with some five hundred people, wondering what was going to happen. Suddenly a yell : " Lunch is served," and we trooped up to an upper chamber where we sat down at long trestle tables to a meal of a mug of coffee, a sandwich, a cake and an orange. While we were bolting these delicacies a man suddenly bellowed out : " Ladies and Gentlemen, I am most happy to welcome you to Hollywood. We are most fortunate in having with us to-day " (I thought he was going to say President Coolidge) " a gentleman whose knowledge and experience is unrivalled. I refer to the editor of the *Hollywood Magazine*, Mr. O. E. Beeheimer."

At that he sat down with a crash and there ambled forward Mr. O. E. Beeheimer, a fine-looking man in striped flannels, rather like John Drinkwater, and with huge horn glasses. For one long hour by the clock, and by the sun which mocked us outside, Mr. O. E. Beeheimer told us of the beauty of Florida, with special reference to Hollywood. Not an emotion was left unplumbed, not a gesture forgotten ; when describing the sea promenade he crouched low and waved his arms like a gorilla.

As usual, his American audience listened with perfect phlegm, punctuated by bursts of applause for which I could not account, but believe they were led by a clique of salesmen. Finally, in his peroration, which brought tears to the eyes of Mr. Leonard, who presumably hears it every day, he broke into poetry :

"I like prose, and I like rhyme,
And I like summer in the winter time."

By that time we had got led away and gave up our usual rôle of people with influential friends : we blossomed forth as buyers and gave exclamations of disappointment and irritation, before an enormous map spread on the table, on learning that such and such a lot had already been sold.

On the way back Mr. Leonard stopped at his country estate on the Dixie Highway and presented us with two vast grapefruit off his trees. A greater white elephant was never known. We carried this miserable fruit through a hot afternoon's shopping.

Some of their answers to questions are very startling and I would suspect them of pulling one's leg, except that they are so deadly serious and practical. I asked "How far north does the Dixie Highway run?" The reply was "To Montreal."

Now that is a long way and I thought it might be a joke, but Mr. Leonard's face showed it was not.

I can't understand their sense of humour: either it is completely non-existent (as I expect) or it is so developed that we cannot follow it. Mr. O. E.



FLAGLER STREET, MIAMI.

Beeheimer's lecture as an imitation in London would, if said word for word, be thought overdone. Such periods of the highest flight, such imagery, such grip, varied by odd sentences delivered in the most colourless and practical tone, such as "I will now briefly hit the high lights."

And, after it was all over, we saw Mr. O. E. Beeheimer striding back to his "home" for all the world like a clerk after a good day's work at a Government Office.

I confess I am moved by the map of South Florida. In government offices I used to pore over the big atlas and, oddly enough, one of the things that attracted me most was that blank in the map in the southern part of this State called the Everglades. I wondered what it was like, and now I have seen it.

Vast swamps and the thickest jungle one could imagine slowly giving way before this amazing "development." To-day, for instance, we watched an enormous sandbank being bodily removed by hydraulic power . . . mud being taken out of the swamps to make roads, or houses being built on the spot out of the coral rock on which Florida is based.

Mr. O. E. Beeheimer was most moving about the oldest of all the States in the Union having become the

youngest, and I, too, thought it was moving to contemplate.

Everyone is so childishly enthusiastic about everything : they count the motors that come into the town daily. I, too, look at the registration plates on the cars and I think I must have seen cars from every State in the Union. To-day I saw cars from California, Nebraska and South Dakota. A skyscraper in Miami town, which was only a shell yesterday, was a quarter finished to-day. Truly an amazing people !

They don't let any niggers live in these places, but construct a special " nigger town " for them outside. If one stops for a moment in the streets one is promptly knocked down by people hustling along. It is all true, as good as ever I could have expected, all except the food, which, here at least, is very nasty, and the coco-nut, which, when split open (and that takes two niggers with an axe) is a poor imitation of the Hampstead Heath variety.

They cannot believe that anything is as good or as great as they are. Mr. Leonard put to us a mass of searching questions about England, which we answered to the best of our ability.

One was, " What is the population of London ? "

I had no idea, but Viola shut her eyes and said, "Seven million."

He gave a condescending laugh and said, "Hardly that, I guess."

I said, "What is the population of New York City?"

"Oh, about seven million," he said.

Again I suspected a joke, but a glance at his face, and the complete self-assurance of an enormous gob through the window of the car made it clear that any comparison between London and any city in the United States had seemed to him in bad taste.

To-morrow we have one more adventure of this kind, to the Rio Vista Isles. Heaven knows what they may be, but it is a wonderful way of seeing the country free, and one gets a harvestful of laughs during the day.

Saturday, December 20th. We remembered that it was the day for Rio Vista when we woke up; the weather had turned, and we were late, and somehow we could not face it, so we just cut it. Also, we were both obsessed with a desire to go to the "dog race." So we had a lunch at our "quick service" place and started off to Hi-a-leah for the dog race. We found a

miniature racecourse with grand stand and all complete. We bought a race card and selected for the first race, from the usual hopeless sentimental reason, a dog called "Miss Diana."

Bells rang, and seven gentlemen, largely coloured and dressed in full jockey's outfit, led on seven greyhounds who appeared thoroughly bored with the process. They then closeted them, heavily muzzled, each one in his tiny cubicle, like pigeons at Monte Carlo, where one and all turned round and faced the wrong way and set up a pitiful yowling. Suddenly a whirring sound was heard, and a stuffed rabbit at the end of a pole started whirling round the course at an incredible rate. The cages were opened, and I must say that the dogs put up a most excellent pretence of pretending it was real game, all except Diana, whose thoughts were elsewhere.

The next sentimental bet we had was "Midnight Joe," thinking of Joe's¹ eye through the hole in the door as he lets one in at midnight. He was last, though hot favourite.

By that time we were thoroughly disgruntled and discouraged, and agreed not to place our sentimental bet on "Knight of G." (after Sir Gerald), especially

¹ Joe, the waiter at the Eiffel Tower Restaurant in London.

when we saw he was a liver-coloured dog who fawned idiotically on his jockey and lay down in his cubicle and howled. He was easily first. Then we came home.

My *Miami News* tells me that storm warnings have been issued. That looks very good for Nassau on Monday.

We discovered this morning that our Sarah was a natural-born British subject, being a native of Nassau. She and Viola fraternized this morning in a way that I am sure would have shocked any American. Afterwards we heard her say to the other coloured maid in the passage, "She's grand—she knows the Governor," and "Why don't you go to Nassau? You can get back here, you're American; I'm English." It was odd, and somehow I saw a vision of a Home Office minute, "This woman cannot be deported; she is a natural-born British subject, having been born in



A. P.

the Bahamas, etc." She considered Nassau infinitely superior to Florida, in which she disagreed with that eminent authority Mr. O. E. Beeheimer.

Viola wrote the following article about these and other niggers :

D., MY DEAR,

You have never spoken, never uttered a word, about the coloured people of America, or their "shoe shines." My first sight of them was in Havana—Easter-egg coloured statues with straw hats—and the work they do on shoes, idealizing the commonest "gents' tan willow calf" to a degree !

The thought given to men's shoes is amazing ! I think they are right ; somehow one does look at shoes, particularly in trains, tubes or buses, and most of them in England leave much to be desired.

Our combined shoe shines for three days in an hotel came to a pound !

We found a perfect dusky, a Jamaican called Larry Mullins. He picked us up in his little Ford by accident. He was a beautiful type, like a Rodin negro, his face hewn out of one block, an O. Henry in wit and a Baedeker in knowledge.

His first words to me on finding me standing

puzzled at a cross-roads were, " You've been handicapped all through till you met me."

I gave him a dazed smile ; he then said, " I guess the lady's English. And I too strictly speaking." Then, raising his hat, " Jamaica."

From that moment, whenever we could afford a car, we took him by the hour from his garage, or, as he termed it, " where I locate the buggy." He soon found out what we liked, sized up our tastes and value. He, started by " Don't miss the cemetery ; you'll sure be tickled by its grandeur." But finding we preferred such sights as the Palm Grove or the Cathedral he was equally bright and well up in all subjects. This morning it was the Cathedral. He swung into the Close and whistled at the Official Guide, who was at the moment having a siesta with what appeared to be a novel of the French type—anyhow he could not leave it, for he was still reading it as he groped his way and led us, with an evil, sinister face, into the Cathedral.

This was plain and ordinary, and restored in rather a vulgar way with cheap tin images and false sky, like things one gets as prizes at a fair in England.

Our black friend, much to our shame, began to hurl abuse at the sexton, till, with his eyes still steadily fixed on the novel, the latter fumbled for keys and opened a most beautiful cupboard where the vestments were kept. These were exquisite ; purple and blue and pink and green, embroidered with flames and pomegranates and vases of flowers like the descriptions of the Tabernacle. Until one remembered Balthazar, the black king who came to bring gifts of frankincense and myrrh, one did not like the feeling of Larry laying his black hands on the priests' garments, but one got over it, like all foolish prejudices, and felt oneself a snob.

He would have made a marvellous sort of major-domo to take home, only I should have always felt that he was mentally a thousand times better equipped than I, and one's only chance with servants is to be in one's own opinion much cleverer than they.

The dark women walk beautifully in Havana, from always holding their baggage or parcel whatever it may be on their heads. As it is generally their provisions for a week, heavy fruit and fish, it may be a fair load, so they are completely

steady to the hips, and then begin to sway a little.

Their clothes interested me tremendously ; stockings always chosen exactly one half-tone lighter than their skins—in fact a flattering match—and then the palest pinks or greens or peacock blues, which make a violent contrast.

There is something tragic about them all ; the same tragedy that lurks in *Othello*. To think that they were shipped to America and these islands from Africa, chained together, crying and dying as slaves hundreds of years before people thought of kindness or gratitude !—and that even after those Christian qualities came along they were still flogged and bought, because it was the custom, until not a hundred years ago ! So each one of their grandmothers and grandfathers was a slave.

One faint disappointment, of all the things which were promised and fulfilled about the South, is the coco-nut. The juice of one nut fills two glasses with a very clear water from a Scottish stream in which a coco-nut has once floated—this is the effect it gives. So one needn't travel so far from home to get that. In many other ways it is very much worth it, something achieved, like reading

G

the whole of Byron, Scott, and Gibbon, which, of course, one will never do ; but, then, one said one would never do this.

Well, we may meet on American soil—or on a misty day in London traffic—who can tell ?

Yours ever,

V.

To-night Viola surpassed herself with "Harold Lloyds" in the kitchen. Piece after piece of toast emerged blackened and smoking from the red hot bars.

She emptied pepper into the ice water, and when I said to her "Where's the ice?" she replied, "In the oven." I don't think that answer can ever have been given before to that question. It turned out that the block of ice was in her opinion too large and needed a little toning down.



- V. AT CORAL GABLES.

We cooked a fish called a Spanish mackerel, which, together with the reeking charnel toast, set up the most appalling stench imaginable.

I made a fine cocktail with oranges, limes and the remains of Billy's gin, which was well watered by that gentleman before he passed it on to me as soda.

At night an enormous kind of cockroach arrives in the kitchen and searches diligently for Sarah's garbage pail. We call them chipmunks for want of a better name, and are powerless to deal with them, as one cannot squash an animal the size of a puppy. I suppose one cannot complain in the tropics, and there are no mosquitoes.

Sunday, December 21st. We spent a quiet day packing and generally preparing ourselves for the ordeal of the next day in the light of a "storm warning" which the U.S. Weather Bureau had thoughtfully issued. In the evening we walked (a longer walk than we anticipated) up to the Flamingo Hotel, the Excelsior of Miami, and sat on a bench overlooking Biscayne Bay for a time. Everything looked very lovely in the evening light.

Monday, December 22nd. We had got Baby to give

us an alarm clock, so that we might wake punctually at six, the boat leaving at eight sharp. This clock, however, gave up the ghost at 3.15 a.m., so that we were left without any idea of the time. I never took a wink, as usual, till 5.30, when I fell into a belated sleep. I woke with a crash at 6.40, and pummelled Viola into life. We both took a dose of Mothersill, following the English Channel directions. The sea looked horrible.

Punctually at seven Mr. Bowen, our tame taxi-man, arrived and, unshaved, unwashed, unbreakfasted, we fell into the taxi.

We arrived at the dock and found our vessel, the *Queen of Nassau*, such a stinking, putrid old hull as would never be allowed to ply between Staines and Shepperton. We learnt that she was a ship that had done good war service, and then had been laid up for four years in Nova Scotia. She had taken two weeks to clean, and with advantage might have taken two years. As we got out of Miami Harbour we hastily swallowed our second dose, and at that moment the craft threatened to become a total wreck a quarter of a mile from shore.

We made two new American friends, Mr. and Mrs. Scott, the former in (apparently) a Guards hat (the

ribbon on the straw, I mean) and some kind of M.C.C. tie. (They were probably the Palm Beach Athletic Club colours.)¹ Mrs. S. said, "Oh, it's only rough like this for ten minutes; then we get into calm water." Hardly were the words out of her mouth when she ran to the side and was ill for an hour by the clock, after which she subsided into coma for the remaining fifteen hours of the journey. The sad part of it was that she was quite right, and that after a short time the sea became an absolute duckpond and the *Queen* resumed her regal bearing. This was due to a mysterious formation called the Bahama Banks, where the water is from twelve to fifteen feet deep, and one can see the bottom of the sea as one goes along. Only wretched tubs like the *Queen* can travel that way at all.

However, it was all very peaceful, and Scott and I descended into a beetle-infested room where we lunched off roast horse and Worcestershire sauce, much enlivened by a huge Thermos he produced containing ice-cold Martinis.

Scott said to the steward: "I don't call this beef *rare*, do you?" I thought he was making a joke about the horse and laughed idiotically, not knowing that "rare" was American for "underdone."

¹ Everglades Club, I discovered later.

We didn't get in till 10.15 ; at that time we touched British soil again, and the first thing we saw was a vast nigger policeman togged out in the most brilliant of uniforms. One felt poignantly and ludicrously patriotic. It was all so typically British, so utterly different from the clang and clatter and efficiency of Miami. The Customs examination was of that courteous kind which consists in patiently marking each piece of baggage with chalk, unexamined. The nigger policeman came up to me and, with a grin that showed yards of pearly teeth, enquired whether I carried fire-arms. I told him I never did. He replied, " Then may I show you to your car ? " And he did.

We drove to the Royal Victoria Hotel, where Her Ex. had kindly secured us rooms, and I found a real live English bar open before retiring to rest behind my mosquito curtains.

Before we left Miami we heard that our Sarah had given birth to a child. Innocent that I was, I never noticed the possibility. As I suppose her husband is also a native of Nassau, H.M. King George has one more subject. (See Home Office minute on the nationality of children of British-born parents born abroad.)

I never thought we should get to Nassau : things have been so difficult, but at last it has happened. And now for what Curtis¹ described as Paradise !

¹ My brother-in-law, Curtis Moffat, who spent a year in Nassau after his marriage.

PART III

NASSAU

NASSAU

Tuesday, December 23rd. Got up at 6.30 and hopped on to the balcony to have a look at the prospect, which I thought enchanting. We dressed early and had our breakfast in a room dazzlingly lit by Osrams with the sun pouring in through the windows. Then out into the town to see something of the sights.

We met a gentleman in a car who presented himself to us as Captain Fenton, the A.D.C. at Government House. He was most agreeable and helpful in the best A.D.C. manner, and spoke largely of the badness of the dancing floors in Nassau, a misfortune which, Heaven knows, will leave me cold. He drove us up to Government House, where we wrote our names in the book, and where I noted with amused and reminiscent admiration the Captain's carelessly assumed but deep determination not to let anyone go near his chief. "Would you like to see H.E. ? He's rather busy this morning, I believe," etc.

In the afternoon we took a car to go round some



'PARADISE " FROM THE BALCONY OF THE VICTORIA HOTEL

of the island. We got a driver who was a weak caricature of Larry Mullins, but he was quite amusing and an efficient guide. There wasn't very much to see, but the loneliness and wildness looked very lovely after the advertisement and vulgarity of Miami. We came to a place like the devastated areas, and were told that this was a tomato plantation. We got out and found acres and acres of the very finest tomatoes apparently growing out of the coral rock. They are apparently also left to rot. "Nobody worries about them," our guide said. However, he worried, for he helped himself largely, and so did we.

We left our letter of introduction to Mrs. Devereux, who is the queen of the island. This letter was given me by a lady in the Eiffel Tower restaurant of whom I knew nothing, and I had grave doubts as to the propriety of presenting it.

Wednesday, December 24th. In the morning we went over to Hog Island, the famous bathing beach. A walk of a quarter of a mile through a real Garden of the Hesperides filled with coco-nut trees and humming-birds brought us to the beach—hard, firm, white sand, and dazzling blue clear water.

My friend Mr. Scott, with characteristic American

thoroughness, what he called "popped in a thermo" into the sea and found it seventy-six. This was good enough for me, and it was just as warm as the best

Lido day, and instead of just shivering in and out, I was able to wait about in my bathing dress until I felt like going in again.



CHRISTMASS EVE, 1924

To-day we moved into our lodging-house, where we have a lovely room, verandah and bathroom for fifteen dollars a week. House-keeping will be more primitive than ever, as there is no cooking apparatus, and very few household utensils.

In the afternoon Viola had a private call to make, so I wandered off on a photographic expedition to the Queen's Steps and Fort Fincastle. She then came for me and took me to see Mr. Maurice, a charming man, who lived in a

lovely house and made us a very potent rum cocktail.

In the evening out into Bay Street to see the beginning of the Christmas orgies of the natives. This is a very strange and primitive business. From eight to twelve p.m. and again from four to eight-thirty a.m., arrayed in the most fantastic fancy dresses, all the niggers march up and down Bay Street beating tom-toms and blowing trumpets. It is a queer survival of their African origin. The noise is terrific. They are apparently moderately sober, and don't fight much ; quite respectful to the spectators, and only intent, as one used so often to be at Oxford, on getting as much noise as possible out of one's own private musical instrument.

Christmas Day, 1924. Sleep was obviously impossible to-night during this island festival. The lady of the house here evidently thought the same, for at five-thirty she began to discourse the " March of the Tin Soldiers " on the pianola with such runs and roulades as would have made Arthur Rubinstein envious.

Viola got up at six and I at six-thirty to go down to the quarters of the Nassauvians' Club in Bay Street

to witness the remainder of the orgies. There, only just awake, I was received by a most courteous member, who offered me champagne. This I felt I couldn't face, but had a cup of strong coffee.

The orgies lasted till eight-thirty, at which hour all the participants melted into thin air in the most orderly manner. The process was the same—just marching up and down with the tom-toms, but some of the costumes were most imaginative. They all had white masks or had whitened their faces.

One was dressed like the Englishman in the Boutique, another had on a Shakespearean costume of red velvet with a trench hat ; there were three Highlanders, and a quantity decked out as women in the latest Paris fashions.

One man especially pleased me : his face was grotesquely whitened, on his head was a little clown's cap, for the rest he was dressed entirely in flour bags. Over his shoulder he carried a vast bundle of sugarcane, and his middle was wreathed round with twenty or thirty green bananas. On the end of a knotted string he led a whippet. A company of native police came round the corner, and my friend addressed them : " Say, where d'ye think you boys are going ? To the front ? Take care, my boys," etc., etc. It somehow

had the effect of making the police look very ridiculous; they probably wished they were doing it too.

Over to Hog in the morning for the usual bathe (on Christmas Day!). Then back to dress ourselves up for lunch at Government House. Viola was very fine in a garment borrowed from Mrs. Scott, a



V OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT HOUSE

piece of doeskin bought in the town for a skirt, and the new red hat we bought in Miami. I was, if anything, rather overdressed.

Viola sat next to H.E. (a most sympathetic and charming personality), and I next to Her E., who was very easy and amusing, and soon made me feel completely at home. Later they drove us to tea with Mrs. Devereux.

We found a handsome lady lying on a sofa like Madame Recamier, and holding a salon of the whole island society. I was scared to death, especially when she said that she didn't know why we wanted letters of introduction, as she was Sir Herbert's best friend. I soon escaped into the cool of the garden with Lady Cordeaux.

Viola has written the following article for the *Nassau Guardian*, and it gives a good idea of what we are feeling about the place :

NASSAU : THE UNDISCOVERED COLONY

Just once perhaps in a lifetime, when faced with a decision, one takes the right one. Decisions are a terror to me, more so than to most people. I beg for some unseen and ulterior power to push me even down the *wrong* road, rather than have to choose the right one for myself.

I had to make the decision of whether we should or should not cross the uncomfortable stretch of water from the comparatively luxuriant discomfort of the States to the Island of New Providence. Being the worst sailor in the world, everything in me cried out against it. But the feeling of Christmas took hold of me, and the feeling of being,

for all their hospitality, among a people more foreign to us in ideas than any.

So one morning, a morning on which all Americans looked alike to us through their horn glasses, when dollars loomed too large, and the ugliness of stolen gin-labelled soda seemed too grotesque, I said to myself, "We will spend Christmas among the English—not so hospitable, but oh ! so old and, oh ! so wise ;" and, going into an office two feet by three, we took our tickets to Nassau. Late at night we arrived in the country from whose bourn no traveller need ever return !

It smelt at once of all the things one remembered in English harbours—tar and casks and casks, "and cheap tin trays." No one said a word : a coloured policeman gently bowed us to an English taxi, and the English taxi drove us to an hotel where every booking-clerk expected us, where they had picked all the native flowers and spread them about the place in bushels, where, of course, not being American, the water in the bath was not running hot, and where there was a fine display of our old friend Nottingham lace . . . but it had the nice dignity and personality we knew ; we were again *somebodies*.

When we awoke in a lovely sleepy town as it might be Bath or Lyme Regis with nothing to commend it or shout its praises except its own excessive loveliness, we felt hopelessly sentimental and proud and humble, and the Star-Spangled Banner was simply outdone by that dingy and sleepily fluttering flag on Government House.

An American brother-in-law had told us of it ; we felt inordinately grateful to him at that minute. "What do they know of England, who only England know?" reiterated with monotonous appropriateness in our ears.

What is Nassau ? How does it look ? What makes it worth the five thousand mile journey across the seas, you say ? Well, one street, a gentle semicircle round a harbour filled with boats great and small . . . the street is stopped abruptly at one end by an immense pink American Arabian-Nights Hotel. One just says, "Hullo, prosperity ! Good for the city, and all that," and passes on. Bay Street is the name of this one big street, running east and west, and with little side streets cut in the coral leading vaguely up a gentle incline. Thank heaven for a hill : Florida has none. . . .

On its north side is water, and a few wharves,

an ice-house and the market ; after this Bay Street loses itself gradually in dispersing " stores," farms and eventually country places.

Parliament Square, near the centre of Bay Street, is full of lovely buildings on a Georgian plan, and a quite perfect jewel of a building such as one hopes and imagines all Colonial towns to have, a white octagonal library with sea-green shutters. One hears it was a prison, but it must have been a light one.

On all this gentle beauty the sun pours its light and draws up to it, as it seems, its pillars of palm ; there is no winter, no fall of leaf ; only a slight crescendo or diminuendo in the bursts of colour of the blossoming vines.

Why does anyone poor ever live in England ? This was our first thought, after carelessly throwing away a perfectly good tomato, and picking another unforbidden, out of a field. No one need ever be cold or hungry, or stand unemployed in the Strand, or offer one Bryant & May's matches.

When *Utopia* was written, Drake had just sailed the Southern Seas : Shakespeare must have heard the tales from these great sailors (or perhaps been here himself, who knows ?) :

" And Nature should bring forth
Of its own kind all foison, all abundance,
To feed my innocent people. . . ."

There could be no more perfect description of this place than these of Prospero's Island.

" Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not. . ."

There is no such thing as a poisonous snake on the island, and the humming-birds are more abundant than bees ; the kind of thing that one never believes from a traveller.

" What private griefs they have, alas ! I know not," but I should think that the Nassauvians' feuds and even sorrows would quickly pass away. There is a breeze from time to time like a rush of wings that catches you at a sultry moment, and seems to carry away any evil that may be hovering.

Why, having found perfection, ever go away ? For the sake of what ? A larger social circle, roast lamb, Eton and Harrow, the Stock Exchange, Big Ben, Harrod's, grouse, the black towns and all their works ? Here we don't need coal, and knives that cut, nor sponges, for the sea is paved with them.

And as for plum-puddings, we had the best ever known for luncheon this Christmas Day after a long bathe. . . .

Friday, December 26th. We had a message from Captain Fenton bidding us present ourselves at



THE OLD SILK COTTON TREE OUTSIDE THE POST OFFICE.

Government House at ten. We did so and were taken out to the Country Club to bathe. Before doing so I played a few holes of quiet golf with the Captain.

We bathed and had an amusing time grappling with two Fortnum & Mason sea-horses. After the bathe a little more golf, which was far more successful than I had hoped after all my troubles. We lunched

with Miss Massey, the editor of the local paper. She provided a tasty native lunch for us.

Saturday, December 27th. I have done the one idiotic thing, allowed the sun to blister my neck and shoulders, and am consequently suffering agony.

This day was devoted to bathing and seeing the "Marine Gardens" through the bottom of a glass-bottomed boat. It is really a wonderful sight. The water is so transparent that one can see the bed of the sea as if it were lit up by powerful lights . . . sponges, every kind of coral, and fish of unimaginable colours and sizes swimming slowly and apparently quite unscared by the boat above them.

An elderly nigger told us the name of every fish and vegetable growth, and boasted that he was the only man in the world with this knowledge.

It was a very delightful and instructive way of spending the afternoon.

Sunday, December 28th. We received a message that we were to present ourselves at Government House at ten-fifteen. We did so, and found Miss Carruthers, a friend of Miss Iva Dundas, Lady Cordeaux's daughter, and Captain Fenton spoiling

for a bathe and golf. So we drove out again to the Country Club, and I was glad to take the price of a cocktail off the Captain, though by a very narrow margin. We then had a bathe which was nice after the exertion of the golf, but was a little windier than usual. However, the sea-horses provided great sport.

Back to lunch at Government House, where I was amazed at being encouraged to lunch in my filthy tropical outfit, very different from my spruce appearance on Christmas Day. I



ON THE WESTERN ROAD

remembered all the times I had offended at Viceregal Lodge in Delhi and could not credit that such rags should be allowed. However, I was reassured by a particularly shocking pair of sandals sported by Captain Fenton. Their Excellencies were charming

to us, and I hope we have settled down into a success.

We spent the afternoon on a picnic along the Western road with the Dean, whom we had met at lunch on Christmas Day, on the Sands near Old Fort. We were joined by the Bishop (what of, or of what persuasion, I could not at first understand, and in any case he looked far too young to be a bishop at all), and Mr. Bruce, a high Government official. The clergy bathed, and afterwards there was an elaborate tea spread on the beach. Viola put some daring questions about the Church, which they turned away with that pedantic half-disapproving banter which is the prerogative of clergymen and schoolmasters.

In the evening we had supper with the Dean, but the jokes, which were uproariously hilarious, were of so local and clerical a character that we both felt out of it. The evening ended with crackers, the clergy putting on paper caps and reading aloud mottoes with many personal allusions to each other, which were unintelligible to us, but sent them into convulsions.

Monday, December 29th. It was heaven to get down to Hog Island and bathe. We had a rain storm at

midday, which lasted half an hour, after which the sun came out with increased brilliancy, and as I type this everything is still and dripping and lovely under the new moon. It is, indeed, Paradise.

Tuesday, December 30th. It is difficult to believe we have been here a week ; the time seems to have passed like lightning. I don't think I have ever been so contentedly happy. Of course, the conditions are ideal : not only the beauty and the colour of the place and the exquisite climate, but the freedom from worry and telephones and bills, though it is true I had one of the latter, after a great struggle to get the registered letter in which it came out of the Post Office. We wake always at six-thirty and spend the next hour leisurely preparing the breakfast, which is usually of fruit and milk, unless we have some "canned" delicacy. Then we dress and catch the ten or the ten-thirty "Bobbie" motor-boat to Hog Island. There we sit about in the sun and bathe and watch the humming-birds till it is time to come back for lunch.

We had a lovely bathe this morning, during which Viola shamelessly scraped acquaintance with a rich American yachtsman named Martin. We are to

have a picnic (pronounced "pagnug") on the yacht. In the afternoon Viola went to a Government House party at the Hotel to do honour to Stephen Leacock. I felt I could not face this and had a pleasant mooching time. In the evening we dined with Mr. Maurice, who once again made us his famous rum cocktail.

Wednesday, December 31st. Received a wire from Diana saying all her plans were changed, and that there was a chance of her joining us here. She would have enjoyed the picnic to-day : I had little hopes of it, thinking it might be boring, especially as we had a wild idea of accepting Vice-Admiral Fergusson's invitation (command, perhaps) to meet him on board his flagship at 3 p.m. We started out soon after ten : the Martins, the Scotts, a pleasant creature called Dr. Posey, and ourselves on the yacht *Bonnie Dundee* of Greenwich, Connecticut. Viola and Mrs. Scott were given rods. Just as I thought I was going to be ill on a glassy sea, Viola gave a wild shout and, after a breathless five minutes, landed a twelve pound barracuta. It was most thrilling and made one forget all troubles. Then we anchored for "still fishing," and the fish were hooked at a prodigious rate. That is to say, everyone caught them except me, who got

no bite, except for a gorgeous moment when I drew on board a large plump panfish, the first of its kind



COOKING THE CATCH

that day. After we had landed seventeen fish, we steamed off to Sandy Cay, an amazing little island covered with coco-nuts, quite a way out to sea. When we were a hundred yards off, Viola leapt in, though

warned by me against sharks and barracuta. Scott produced cocktails and the infection was such that I hurled myself into the quite tepid water before settling down to a fine lunch of the catch on the island. A very pleasant day. As we were moving off and trying to get into the dinghy to row out to the yacht, Mrs. Scott did a marvellous Harry 'Tate fall, with a bottle of beer in each hand, and then insisted on diving for the beer till she had recovered it. She then got entangled with a hermit crab, which I had to prise off her hand with a pencil. For supper we ate one of the panfish, which we decapitated with the greatest difficulty but which was quite excellent when we finally got it cooked.

Then came the great Government House ball. My much-creased dress-suit was dragged out and a white waistcoat which had seen happier days. Viola found her black Molyneux and livened it up with fresh poinsettias and a pair of Mrs. Scott's slippers. We arrived at about 9.15, and found everything in full swing and the band of H.M.S. *Calcutta* discoursing a very queer music of their own, the main *motif* of which appeared to me to be as much out of tune as possible.

Viola did finely with His Excellency and the

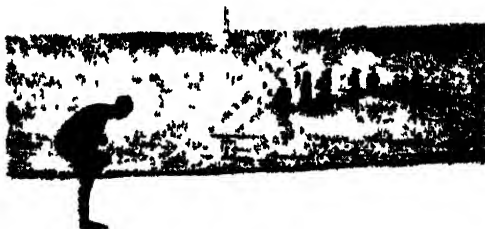
Admiral, and was generally the queen of the ball. I found some of the Hog Island bathing cronies, and discussed the iniquities of boiled shirts with them. It was quite amazingly hot. The room looked very pretty and the young officers from the two warships seemed very much in their element. Captain Fenton was in a fine state of A.D.C. fuss. I talked for an hour to Mrs. Martin ; she did not hear a word I said. Also she talked so quickly and so low that I did not hear a word she said. However, we got on quite well and the marine saxophone anyhow made conversation impossible, but I gathered she found all Englishmen so attractive, though she thought most Englishwomen had no charm. I bowed my acknowledgments as their representative.

We stayed till twelve o'clock, at which all the lights went out for a minute. When they reappeared His Excellency was found mounted on a small dais, and delivered himself of the following speech : " Ladies and gentlemen, Lady Cordeaux and myself wish you a very happy New Year." Then we sang "Auld Lang Syne," and it was all over. But we were as tired as if we had climbed Mount Everest.

So ended the disastrous year of Our Lord, 1924, with high hopes for 1925.

1925

January 1st, 1925. A feature of New Year's Day on the island is a visit to the home of Dr. and Mrs. Dalton at their lovely house some twelve miles out of Nassau. Their Excellencies drove us out. We were courteously received by Dr. Dalton, a charming



NEW YEAR'S DAY 1925

personality, though not, I understand, a doctor of physic.

Quite a hundred and fifty people were there and a lot were already in the sea. This seemed the best place to make for, rather than talk to the garden party guests, so I joined the bathers in exquisite calm and translucent waters.

Dressing was difficult in a hut three by four with no one properly equipped, and I was reduced to borrowing the towel of a colossal American named Bertram France. No sooner had I represented myself at the party, with shoes full of sand and hair awry, than I discovered His Excellency was anxious to be off, having been annoyed by a sand-fly. It was the signal for a rout and we never looked back till we reached home.

In the evening Viola had a date to dine with the Admiral on board his flagship. Very distinguished. I was not asked. Instead I had a pleasant evening at the Hotel with my old cronies the Scotts and their charming friends the Stonehams. Stoneham has a wine-coloured face with snow-white hair, and is always dressed entirely in white. He has also an unquenchable passion for crossword puzzles.

Friday, January 2nd. Saturday, January 3rd.
We received one of our summonses to present ourselves at Government House for the morning bathe.

Lady Cordeaux had by that time conceived an idea of moonlight theatricals, and wanted Viola to produce them. Up we went to tea again in the afternoon, when the ladies promoted their plan, while the Governor

and I did a crossword puzzle together and finished it.

In the evening we dined at the Hotel with the Scotts, and had a pleasant dinner.

Saturday was entirely devoted to the theatricals, buying Shakespeare, borrowing Shakespeare, cutting Shakespeare, rehearsing Shakespeare. In the evening Mr. Bruce called on us during one of our more amazing dinners, clad entirely in a white dress suit with a green cummerbund.

Sunday, January 4th. Faced with the prospect of a doubtful afternoon on the yacht of a gentleman who spends each winter in Nassau harbour, we had a lovely morning at Hog Island. We then returned to lunch again with Miss Massey. For our delectation she had provided a fish chowder ; it turned out to be the kind of food I revelled in and I lapped it up, returning to a second portion. The rest of my lunch was ruined by my inadvertently biting a red chili which, with an inverted sense of practical joking, she had laid round the table in the manner of salted almonds.

I thought I was going to die. Viola contracted permanent hiccoughs. We then pushed off in a taxi

to the wharf, where we were met by our host's boat.

The sun was shining fiercely, but we were herded into a Black Hole of a saloon and regaled willy-nilly on a sit-down tea of plum pudding and mince-pies. The room became so stifling that a genial octogenarian lady and myself finally fled out on deck.

Benedictine was handed round, which I thought an odd tropical drink, but gratefully accepted. Just as I was thinking we should never get off, for it was no use remembering a pressing engagement in the middle of the sea, eight bells rang, flags were pulled down, and we were pushed again into the boat.

In the evening up to Government House again, where we took "pot-luck" dinner with their Excellencies, after which the ladies and Captain Fenton retired to the moon-lit garden with Shakespeare, leaving the Governor and myself together. I played him my much dwindled repertoire on a cracked piano till I ran dry ; then we did a terribly difficult cross-word puzzle with the help of a vast dictionary, finishing it on the tick. It was a great effort, containing such words as coriander, tanager, tarlatan and pus.

All night long in the patch of ground outside a

rooster crowed without pause, and at seven the pianola started.

Monday, January 5th. We thought we would give bathing a miss for the first time this morning, so I went down to the Post Office and collected our mail. Then I paid a visit to the Public Library, that lovely octagonal building in Parliament Square, and there I read Duff's maiden speech and of his triumph in the House of Commons. I am so glad, and I am only sorry that Diana couldn't



WHEN SHE DID COME!

have been there. No word from her yet as to coming here.

In the evening Viola went up to Government House to rehearse. I am told that His Excellency asked for me eagerly by my Christian name in order that I might play the piano to him. This is ghastly.

I have played him my repertoire twice over, and can never, never conjure up another tune.

I have bought a fine linen coat for thirty-six shillings, of which I am very proud.

Tuesday, January 6th. A very pleasant Hog Island in the morning and nothing much in the afternoon till six, when we went to the studio of Mr. Jack Adamson, who, I discovered, was the member of the Club who had been so kind to me on Christmas Day. He was a charmingly modest young man who went through agonies about the quality of his cocktails, which were very good. He has taken some of my negatives and promises to make enlargements for me. Up to Government House after dinner, where, during the three hours' rehearsal, I was left alone with His Excellency. I felt sorry for him, as I was sure he wanted to go to bed, but he stuck me out manfully, and I was equally adamant against repeating my musical *tour de force*. We did a couple of crossword puzzles.

Wednesday, January 7th. The first bad day as regards weather : blowing a gale and torrents of rain. I was in despair, especially when all the old pundits

said: "Ah, yes, when we have what we call a 'norther,' it always lasts for eight days." I spent the morning in the Public Library, where I was pleased to find *Sketches* and *Bystanders*, etc.

At one o'clock Captain Fenton called for us to take us out to lunch with Mrs. Devereux. The hurricane still raged. Mrs. D. was most agreeable, but rather terrifying, knowing everyone and full of caustic comments. There was also present her daughter, Mrs. Campbell, whose witty sallies kept Captain Fenton in an ecstasy of joy. We had a good lunch, starting with lobster, which unfortunately restarted Viola's hiccoughs.

We didn't get away till about five, but I succeeded in wiping out the affront of the letter of introduction by a rendering of one of Elsa Maxwell's tunes on a piano that was soundless with the soft pedal down, and a gong otherwise. But it was voted fine and our reputation is restored.

We dined with the Scotts at the hotel, and then they and Viola went off to a nigger performance of *Trial by Jury*. I did not think I could face this, so I went off to my old friend Mr. Stoneham's house to do cross-word puzzles. I had been told he was the Capablanca at this, but I found that it only meant that he had

done so many that he knew things by long experience, such as "sailor : I guess that's tar ; it always is." When I guessed a word, and I really *was* very bright, he called his wife and said : " Grace, I'll say this fellow's a dandy ! " We did two and had a bottle of beer.

Thursday, January 8th.

This day was entirely devoted to Signor Morosini, Counsellor in some Italian Embassy and Madame Morosini, *née* Diver, as she inscribed herself in the Governor's book. She has decided to dislike this place and everything in it and most of all the sun. The

Counsellor is a Neapolitan, born in London, and therefore a British subject (see Home Office minute), and educated at Harrow, so that he speaks English as well and better than we do. He has taken an enormous fancy to Viola and has followed her everywhere ever since she spoke



THE QUEEN'S STEPS, NASSAU

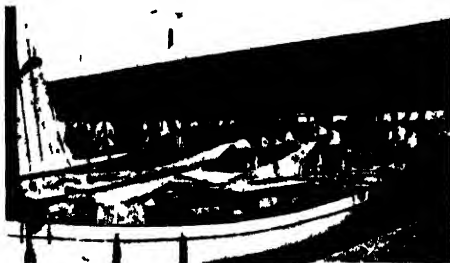
Italian to him at Old Fort on New Year's Day.

His Excellency drove us out to his house, from which he made a startling appearance clad in a black calico bathing suit with several holes in it. The Counsellor flung us into a small leaking row-boat and lustily pulled off to a place he had discovered himself on the wrong side of Hog Island. Personally, I did not care for it, as one had to walk half a mile over sharp coral points till the water reached one's chest. But the water was tepid and pleasant, the greybeards' talk about the "norther" having been sheer bosh, and the day still and exquisite.

We lunched with them, a queer lunch, the choice of drinks consisting of sherry, Scotch and coco-nut milk. The great topic was the trip we were to have in the afternoon in the boat of Dr. Dalton, which the Counsellor proposed to rent. After lunch, Mrs. Morosini wrapped herself in some heavy wraps and we set out to find the doctor's boat. After an ineffectual search, during which we looked for it as it might have been a thimble, the Doctor himself appeared, hat and tie awry, and trying to carry off with a light touch the fact that the vessel was not ready. The Counsellor, having armed himself with a pail

containing a live conch for bait, was set on fishing, Dalton or no Dalton, so he chartered a motor boat and off we set.

In the first five minutes I hooked a whale, which bit off the bait, hook, line and all, and departed. We then got out to sea, where the waves were prodigious.



FRUIT AND FISH MARKET, NASSAU.

Mrs. Morosini turned bright green and clasped her husband's hand. I myself found it very unpleasant. Viola did a Jack Tar. I was glad to return safe and unhumiliated.

Diana wires she comes Sunday week !

Friday, January 9th. The morning was occupied with mail, and we lunched finely off three fish bought

for threepence in the market, and entitled "grunts." In the afternoon I had my first driving lesson on a Ford. I made an inauspicious start by driving into a coco-nut tree, but after that I got on finely and drove about three miles without any contretemps.

Being the full moon, we were asked out to a moonlight picnic by their Excellencies, who had been lent the *Bonnie Dundee*. We struck off at five, the expedition consisting of the Government House party, Mr. and Mrs. Bruce and Mrs. Campbell. The captain of the vessel, a Danish gentleman, refused to take a local pilot with him, at which His Excellency gravely wagged his head. And he was quite right, as I am sure he always is, for when we got to Salt Cay, our destination, we were nearly dashed to pieces on the rocks, and but for Her Excellency's determination, would probably have given it over; however, we managed to land in a perilous row-boat. There we found what no doubt was a lovely island, but even in the bright moon there was not much to see. We sat down to a moonlight meal. The brightest spot was a cargo of beer, but there was nothing to open it with. Captain Fenton, conscious of deficient staff work, rushed at the bottles madly with a skewer and nearly took off one finger. I took his place and, after a

great deal of work, and sousing myself in beer from head to foot, managed to prise open one or two.

We started for home soon after and had a still more perilous journey to the vessel.

Saturday, January 10th. It looks as if the weather had gone again, but at ten it became very sunny, though a high wind still blew. We were taken to the Porcupine Club, on Hog Island, by the Scotts. This Club is reserved exclusively for Americans, and within its precincts they speak openly and unashamedly of English as foreigners, which grated on me a little in this supposedly British possession. We had a nice bathe in a roughish sea and a good though too protracted lunch at the Club.

I do not care for the " nice breeze " which is always pointed out as the chief attraction of this place. I suppose if I lived here I should welcome it, but at first sight it is merely wind, and that I never liked. The other disadvantage about this otherwise perfect resort is the outlandish din that goes on all day and all night : (a) Everyone has a Ford plus a Klaxon and hoots all the time ; (b) everyone has a pianola or Victrola and plays all the time ; (c) the ships in the harbour announce the hour, quite independently of

clocks, by sirens ; (d) the cocks crow all night, without reference to dawn ; (e) the cats pursue their amours at night more fiercely even than at home, and the dogs bark as well ; (f) the children cry all day, except when they are letting off fireworks.

At five I had my second driving lesson on the Ford, going out this time along the west and more populous road. I made some progress, but my teacher will not let me go fast enough, and he is so full of his private grievances that I am often in the position of merely taking him for a drive.

In the evening I went up to Government House to see a rehearsal of *The Dream*. I found the company rehearsing in the most lovely spot imaginable, and the lighting beautifully devised by Mr. Adamson and the Postmaster, the tall palm trees in the light of the strong Watt lamps artfully concealed being incredibly lovely. As I arrived I heard a high sing-song monotonous chant, which I discovered to be Captain Fenton in the rôle of Demetrius. Then Hermia, in the person of Miss Dorothy Hines, joined in with so thick a Montreal burr that for a time I could not find my bearings. Lady Cordeaux looked very fine with long stick and train. His Excellency was in charge of the lighting.

Suddenly Mr. Gunther, the esteemed President of the Bank here, arrived as Bottom, bearing an authentic ass's head, or, to be strictly accurate, a horse's head to which longer ears had been pinned. The sight of this apparition was too much for the two dachshunds, who set up a tumultuous barking. His Excellency turned off the lights and for a time all was chaos. The Very Rev. the Dean was the prompter, and temporary producer *vice* Viola, and was dissatisfied with the bit where Lysander follows out Demetrius in anger. Taking the centre of the stage, and bathed in the limelight which the Governor had now restored, he stamped and said : " Be in more of a rage ; be in more of a rage ! Do it like this ! " It was fine acting.

Sunday, January 11th. Viola had a date with the Morosinis, so I did a lonely bathe at Hog Island. But it was delicious, and the water was like a tepid bath. I lunched with the Morosinis. Madame M. has developed an odd sense of pawky humour which is rather attractive. Again the topic of conversation was the boat of Dr. Dalton and how Mrs. Dalton was to arrive punctually at three in her car to escort us to it. Three came,

and three-fifteen, and three-thirty, and no Mrs. Dalton.

We tried a little fishing off the pier, but the water was so clear that the only sport was to watch the fish eat the bait off the hook. At three fifty-five Mrs. Dalton puffed up, announced that Dr. Dalton was aboard the lugger, a tale we could hardly credit, but added : " Why, I don't believe I've any gas " (i.e., petrol). She had not, and after one expiring grunt, the car became inanimate. She then hailed a passing motorist and made him drive her to the " gas " depot. There she purchased sufficient " gas " to take her a quarter of a mile ; from the second halting-place we walked to the dock, where, sure enough, were the Doctor, the boat and some ladies who had been waiting a long time in the sun. We boarded the boat and went for a very long sail, the object of which was to prove to M. Morosini, the prospective renter, that the boat existed and that it moved. Dr. Dalton (Christian name Freeman) was banished to the galley to make tea. He is a charming little gentleman and, I am told, a Doctor of Marine Biology.

In the evening another " pot-luck " at Government House. I took with me a preposterous crossword puzzle I had invented, and it went to my heart to see

the Governor wrestling with it for hours at a time, when it was quite deficient in places and wholly ludicrous throughout. Later I did one with him, and we got out "zymosis" and "Zwickau" just as the curtain rang down on the ante-penultimate rehearsal of *The Dream*. Still later Viola did some local imitations which were a great success, and the whole party escorted us back to our gates.

All night long a dog barked outside our window, not at intervals like most dogs, but without taking a breath. Viola woke up Mr. Summers, our landlord, who seemed used to the noise, and the dog was silenced, only to be relieved by a pair of roosters who crowed lustily till dawn.

Monday, January 12th. The noises of the island have been added to by a man with an ice-cream cart which rings a bell as it goes. Also, mouth-organs have apparently been served out to all the nigger children on the island.

We had a nice bathe at Hog in the morning and did a miniature long-distance swim down to the Porcupine Club. At five I went down to the Colonial Hotel, the home of American millionaires, and had



THE COLONIAL HOTEL NASSAU

my hair cut and shampooed for the modest sum of 8s. 6d.

Dinner was a failure, as the bacon Lady Cordeaux had kindly sent us had gone astray and we were reduced to buttering two eggs laid by the fowls who had kept us awake all the night before, perhaps in the act of laying those very eggs. The "nice breeze" has calmed down, and it augurs well for the weather for the performance to-morrow night. Mr. Summers, however, pessimistically prophesies the wettest night that the Bahamas have experienced for many years. I don't know what signs he relies on, unless it is the exceptional nocturnal activity of his dog and his fowls.

Saw Dr. Dalton for a moment ; he has let his boat for a week and was sporting a new tie to celebrate it.

In the evening attended the dress rehearsal of *The Dream* in the garden. Viola was cruel to poor Miss Hines about her Canadian accent. I thought she looked a dream of beauty. Captain Fenton very fine in tunic, bare knees, golf stockings and sand shoes ; Mr. Duncan equally fine in Viola's tea-gown and red football stockings ; Miss Carruthers sported a noble wreath of poinsettias. Mr. Goldberg of the Colonial Hotel discoursed charmingly quite appropriate music.

..

An important figure in the show is a gentleman resembling the late M. Cambon called H. S. Lamb, who styles himself "an old Thespian, from Daly's," and has evidently ruled theatrical Nassau till the arrival of Viola. He assumes a troubadouresque style by sporting a coco-nut hat and slinging a guitar round his middle, and he is determined that somewhere in *The Dream* the Barcarolle from the *Tales of Hoffmann* shall be played by him on the guitar and sung by a chorus of invisible voices. "Very unsuitable," says H.E., whenever the subject crops up. Everyone is exercised to find out the least conspicuous part of the play in which to insert the Barcarolle.

Some new noises have arrived ; the house next door has imported a cargo of turkeys, which "gobble-gobble" all night, as well as the fowls ; then a steam-roller has arrived, which the Americans call a "road-gang." (They call the quarantine station the "pest house.") As I write, the pianola goes on strongly below, while the road-gang operates outside.

I have not said enough about the Hon. (courtesy title) A. J. Gunther, a gentleman of almost preternatural solemnity, who is filling the rôle of Bottom. Viola says he is the most unemotional actor she has ever met, and has taken up the rôle of Bottom on

request in the same spirit as if one had asked him to drive a nail into the wall. He wears two pairs of glasses *beneath* his ass's head, a property he is always fondling, and trying to improve with a penknife.

Tuesday, January 13th. Viola did not wish to bathe, and Miss Carruthers did, so I took her over to Hog. She led the younger dachshund on the end of a string and carried a change of hats to wear in the water. After the bathe the dachshund escaped. However, the animal was discovered seated with great composure, waiting for the motor boat.

In the afternoon we did a little quiet shopping, and at cocktail time went to the Stonehams, where I found him scratching his head over one of the simpler puzzles. The light which particularly worried him was "Persian poet in four letters," of which he had already got -MAR. I supplied the missing letter, which delighted him. Suddenly, I looked at the clock, which said 7.10. At 7.15 I was due dressed at Government House. I flew back, and arrived bathed in perspiration at Government House, to find they had started dinner. This was not too good, though I was received without any word or look of reproach, which was typical of this charming household. After dinner,

in spite of the solemnity of the occasion, H.E. did a puzzle. At 9.30 we walked down to the garden, where we found three hundred people trying to fit themselves into a hundred and ninety seats.

The Dean arrived with a miniature gallows and a hurricane lamp attached to it, which he nailed into a palm tree before seating himself underneath it as prompter. H.E. complained of the cold, which was really not noticeable, and sent for ulsters. The garden looked unbelievably beautiful, bathed in Mr. Adamson's (and the Postmaster's) soft lights.

Suddenly, from behind a hibiscus plant, a fine chorus of male voices was heard in a glee, and the romantic figure of the Old Thespian was dimly seen twanging his guitar. The second glee was with movement ; that is to say, the Misses Anne Hunt, Anne Rich and Violet Hicks took the centre of the stage clad in pastoral dress.

The idea was that they were to throw a ball girlishly to each other in innocent play, but Miss Hunt, either in nervousness or malice, delivered a series of the most difficult slip catches, which no one held, so that the ball was always being picked up from the ground.

The next glee was danced by Mrs. Stone, a very



V AND LADY CORDEAUX AS OBERON AND TITANIA

creditable performance. Mr. Lamb twanged his guitar from behind the hibiscus plant.

The Dean then rang a diminutive bell, and announced an interval of ten minutes. At the end of this time, or, as it seemed, a great deal longer, the strains of the much-expected Barcarolle were heard, and Mr. Lamb's ideals were consummated. "Very unsuitable," remarked H.E. in an audible aside, during one of the softer passages.

The great moment had now arrived. The lights went half down, and Lady Cordeaux, looking really lovely as Titania, appeared from the distance, escorted by her train of fairies. Then Viola came on from behind the giant Spanish laurel which formed the background of this incomparable setting; she looked divine and her scenes with Titania and Puck (Miss Iva Dundas, looking wonderfully Puck-like, with tousled head and in flaming red) were quite lovely. The "mortals" scene went very well, too, and there was but one bit of comic relief where Captain Fenton dried up and in response to the Dean's stentorian prompt, said: "Oh, dear!"

The surprise of the evening was the electrifying performance of the Hon. Mr. Gunther as Bottom. Grave as ever, and more than usually bespectacled,

he had gone up to Lady Cordeaux and said : " Lady Cordeaux, would it disturb you if I hee-hawed ? " Her ladyship said " No," and, sure enough, when he had been led to the " flowery bed " he gave vent to a series of hee-haws that convulsed his large audience.

The success of the show was never in doubt for a second. Mr. Goldberg was a signal success with his most appropriate music, the Barcarolle having been happily disposed of. The " morning lark " was amazingly featured by one Mrs. Young, and the end of the play, with the solitary figure of Puck beneath the moonlight, sweeping with a besom, was one of the most moving things I have ever seen.

The Dean yelled for Oberon, very nearly breaking up the whole illusion. The lights were turned on, and Viola received a basket of roses and a box of chocolates from the Fairies. Lady Cordeaux also received a bouquet and the whole company took a call.

It was all very exciting and pleasant and like a London first night. All our old cronies were there, Scott in an amazing tropical dress-suit, Mrs. Scott in full regalia, the immense figure of Bertram France, who has become Hercules since he took to water, towering over everything. Lady Cordeaux was so

excited that she could hardly be prevented from doing the whole play all over again.

Mr. Summers's view of the weather was not justified, and the night was clear and still, and the moon behaved quite admirably. Presentations were made ; Scott bowed stiffly from the waist to H.E. ; everybody seemed delighted. H.E. threw off his ulster (it was dripping hot) and lit a cigar. Captain Fenton tied a bandana round his head, and amazingly changed himself from Demetrius into a pirate. Lady Cordeaux thanked everyone for their help, though most had done nothing.

Captain Fenton and Mr. Duncan staggered up, weighed down by a gigantic Victrola (gramophone), music was started, and the dance began. Champagne cup and cider cup, which were indistinguishable, were served out galore. Viola took the floor with H.E. Later on, H.E. suddenly tired, and this memorable day came to an end with a bang.

Wednesday, January 14th. Rather a wasted day for me, though I quite enjoyed it. Viola felt she must pay a visit to the Morosinis, so I stayed at home and wrote letters, and read the *Times* in the Library. At lunch time the weather showed signs of breaking up.

I took a taxi to Fleetwood, where I found Madame M. revelling in the sudden chill. Lunch was served, and again the drinks were sherry, Scotch, and coco-nut milk. After lunch, went through the farce of fishing off the pier, this time in a blinding rainstorm.

All the afternoon we rested, our rest broken by a cable from London saying that the Everyman Theatre had decided to do Viola's play. That excited us a bit. At five my car turned up, and I took Viola for a drive. I thought to delight and surprise her by my wonderful driving, but it was a failure. She complained

that I did not make sufficient use of all the gadgets ; it was useless to explain that they were largely cigar-lighters and other such trifles. When I sounded the horn, going round a corner, she thought it was my teacher, and said, " You must learn to do that." I



BREAKFAST ON THE BALCONY.

got depressed by my failure, and drove recklessly through puddles as large as lakes.

The weather having badly turned, the Nassauvians are, or pretend to be, pleased. The "nice breeze" has become a whirling hurricane, and Mrs. Maurice had contracted a fine English cold by revelling in it. We got home for dinner, and found a real Mother Hubbard : there was not a stick to eat, except some of the Governor's bacon, which had gone mouldy, and that we swallowed together with some of the Governor's biscuits, which had also gone mouldy. There was not even any ice. We fell to bed at nine.

Thursday, January 15th. This morning the gale is raging fiercely in spite of the bright sun. It looks as if the old boy's "norther" had really come this time, and nine days of it are prophesied. I hope it will blow itself out before Diana comes, if indeed she is coming, for we have heard nothing more. We spent a quiet morning shopping, buying a Thermos for four shillings, and three grunts, a fish I have discovered makes me sick, for threepence. Everybody says : "What a lovely day !" and "What a lovely breeze !" and we grind our teeth in anger.

We went into the Bank where Mr. Gunther is king,

and he called us into his sanctum and made pretty specches of compliment with portentous gravity. His Bottom leather jerkin lay rolled up on the floor of his office ; no doubt the ass's head was in the safe. In the afternoon the weather went again, and the " photograph call " for *The Dream* seemed in danger. However, we thought we had better present ourselves at Government House. There we found Lady Cordeaux completely attired as Titania, but not much other sign of life. We had tea and Lady C., whose energy since the play has been uncurbable, wished to go off to hunt for a mythical chicken farm. I consulted with Fenton in a corner, and we decided we could put up a fight against going. H.E. took a watering-can and some of the smallest plants I have ever seen, and said he had work in the garden. Fenton and I played some good garden golf, till he lost one of the only two balls with a rash stroke.

We then came upon H.E. at his task, who said, " Why not have some shots at the house ? Tubby Lowther " (or some such name) " and I used to do that, and if you break a window, that counts ten." It seemed odd advice from the Governor, but he was evidently quite serious. Unfortunately, we only had the one ball, but we had a shot or two each,

without much endangering the structure. The ladies did not come in till seven, which caused H.E. and myself anxiety about our wives, and Fenton about the car. In the evening we again found a complete Mother Hubbard, so, not feeling we could bear it any longer, rang up Miss Massey and asked whether we might share her meal. There we had excellent Okra soup, steak and onions, and beer.

Friday, January 16th. In the morning the visit to the Morosinis, which has now become a tri-weekly function. I went through the ancient farce of fishing off the pier, while Viola and Morosini bathed. Lunch, sherry, Scotch and coco-nut milk.

In the evening we went to see the Scotts. We found that Mr. Scott was off on a fishing trip to Andros, and was engaged in packing. Actually, he was in what the Americans call B.D.V.'s, which means a kind of white linen combinations. He was very hot, and his packing seemed to consist entirely of fitting bottles of every shape and size into his small valise. "Each man takes his booze, you see," was his explanation.

He gave me a bottle of priceless pre-war Kentucky rye whiskey and a couple of illustrated time-tables.

I have never had more agreeable gifts. I read the time-tables till midnight, and cried over all the lovely places I seemed to be missing. Orlando, Fla., seemed especially desirable. Mr. O. E. Beeheimer should have told us of it.



V AT THE PORCUPINE CLUB

Saturday, January 17th. We went to Hog in the morning, and had a divine bathe. We then lunched at home off horse, disguised as ham, bought from a Chinese gentleman, and a fine can of cherries.

After lunch I collected a very distinguished date to play golf with H.E. I presented myself at three, and Their Excellencies drove me out to the Golf Club. There we were joined by Captain Fenton, and we

played nine holes of golf. My own skill at the game surprised me, but the champion was H.E., who played like a cross between Harry Vardon and Lord Oxford, i.e., very short and correct, and the winning game every time. I had a caddie whom we universally reported for whistling. It was adorably hot.

I sent three shillingworth of gutta-percha into the bluest of oceans with my second shot, and my Whistling Rufus seemed unwilling to wet his black feet by looking for it. After the nine holes, H.E. and I watched Miss Carruthers take the two dachshunds for a bathe, a pursuit they disliked, and showed that they disliked as only dogs can.

Miss Carruthers has sent me a crossword puzzle of her own invention, written rather illegibly on a scrap of soiled paper. The first light I see is "Railway line, obs. and abbr." Then I see "neutar" (*sic*), then "pert. to cricket," then "Indian mammal," then "symbol of anity" (*sic*); then, "pert. to fishing," then "a turnip, obs. and Scotch," then "body of men." I feel I can't attack it, and I know I have the support of H.E., who has let loose a flood of stingers about this wasted labour of love.

I have, since writing this, upset a glass of gin over the MSS. and little can be seen except : " 67. To

cause to swell," and "32. Nausea." I fear there is no chance now of my tackling it.

At nine Captain Fenton came to call for Viola to take her to the Colonial Hotel to dance. I wandered down half an hour later, and found a very gay scene going on. All the youth and beauty of Nassau, and everything else as well.

I was a little lonely, having no partner, and gazed out alone on the incomparable beauty of the harbour under the stars, but on Tuesday, D.V., Diana will be here. I follow her progress on the time-table Scott gave me, and as I write, I guess she is between Thalmann and Jacksonville, and not far from the oddly-named Jekyll Island. To-morrow she will cross on the *Miami*, on which we once suffered so much, and, again D.V., will arrive at nine on Tuesday morning.

Sunday, January 18th. We got up rather late, and missed both church, of which we had a wild idea, and the "Bobbie." I read a serious book on the colour problem lent me by Lady Cordeaux. Up to Government House to lunch, where we had "pot-luck" and ate heartily.

Afterwards a general rest was commanded. H.E.

came to me with a crossword puzzle of which he had done all but three words, and implored me to finish it while he took his siesta. I settled down in a burning sun with the dachshunds, and after two hours' work with Webster's Dictionary got him the three words, which were respectively "alar," "solu," and "tret."

Then came the photograph call for *The Dream*. Everyone appeared in their costumes, and Mr. Adamson arrived with what seemed to me a rather moderate camera. I had both our Kodaks, and ruined his professional efforts by a great whirling click just at the moment when he was going to let his off, and trying to look as if I had done nothing. However, I had the laugh on him, as he ran out of films, which seemed to me unprofessional, and he had to say to me, "Excuse me, Sir, but may I borrow your Kodak?" He did, and took what I hope will be some fine snaps, better anyhow than mine, for in my excitement and my desire to escape notice my hand shook like an aspen.

At five Their Excellencies drove us out to the Golf Club, where I was rash enough to immerse myself in the sea for five minutes. We dined off three of our landlord's eggs.

Monday, January 19th. The noises of the island increase daily : roller-skates, as well as mouth-organs, have now been served out to the children. . There is a woman who practises scales from 7 to 8 p.m. every day, and the activities of the fowls, cats, dogs, turkeys, increase daily and nightly. Viola wrote the following article about this time :

SECOND IMPRESSIONS. NASSAU

A month's stay in any part of the world, if you live and mingle with the people, can give you the right to say, " I lived at so-and-so for some time." Those who live in hotels have no such right ; they can only be said to be living by, with and from the hall porter. They do not know where the post office is, what time the mail goes, the thousand and one things one must have, such as salt, pepper, paper, soap, ice, and water, the last being almost the same price as wine in other countries.

People at hotels only see their own rooms, their own trunks, and their fellow-travellers, generally of their own nationality ; and their trips are merely tourist excursions to the countryside, and their bathing bathing for fashion's sake. Whereas we lodging-dwellers, with our communal life, get a

very fair summing-up of what existence here would be for ever. Perhaps the first rapture of palms, eternal sun and sunsets, humming-birds and verandahs has worn away to a certain extent. But a new affection for the hours of the day belonging to certain occupations, and the street dedicated to certain shops, has taken its place.

Drawbacks, of course, one has found, drawbacks even to me, of whom parents said I was immune from discomfort! The first hardship is noise. For "a little town by river or seashore," there is none like it for noise. Hooters, or rather honkers of motors, hoot or honk all day, not for the sake of the traffic, but merely to inform the inhabitants that they are out. There are musical academies, the noise of eight pianos playing in different directions, and eight soprano voices in different keys. Then there is the noise of niggers talking to one another across the street, as in the apathy which the place engenders one would never cross a street provided one's voice would carry.

There are also the Americans, who cannot exactly be called drawbacks, as they are a great boon to the finances, hotel-power and fun of the town. But of course they must have cocktail

parties at six o'clock, the best time, when, as Jack Barrymore said of Nassau (and he is an Irishman) the sea is red. And they must make remarks about the sea, as to whether it is "great" or not, or whether it is "good" or not. Then they introduce in mid-ocean. "Mrs. Johnson, may I present Mr. and Mrs. Jackson?" . . . Poor Mr. and Mrs. Jackson must needs tread water while they shake hands and bow from the waist. These introductions were thought by me to be a joke! On being "presented" for the first time I dived with a great giggle, only to find these vast striped American diaphragms bowing on the surface when I rose. I said affectedly, "Formalities at sea!" No one laughed, and they merely thought me ill-mannered.

The other slight disappearance is the quick disappearance of ice. Ten years ago an ice-house was built here and ruled over by a long eye-lashed and slim person whose courtesy rivalled that of Lord Balfour. But his ice-house is a terrifying catafalque, full of clanking machinery, which closes at six, so that those who arrive panting with a string bag at five minutes past are shut out, and knocking on the white shutters is vain, meaning that one will

have to return, cocktailless, to one's butter melting in its bowl.

Another genuine drawback is ants : shut your cake or bread up in a brazen box . . . ants will be there in their millions. Enter your porch, verandah, piazza, or call it what you will, after dark, and cockroaches the size of soup-ladles will be lightly feeding on whatever you have provided for supper ; a flick with a duster or bedroom slipper will only send them soaring on wings towards your face. Truly a drawback, but nothing can ever beat the gentle climate, the evergreen grass, the hibiscus, and the Gardens of the Hesperides, as I call the bathing island, nor the actual sea, brilliant as aquamarine, and more transparent than glass. . . . One must always be grateful to fortune and misfortune and all the things that combine to guide our feet to these lovely lands—and, as always, one longs for a second spell of youth in order to begin life over again. In fact, to eat one's cake in England and have it here as well.

We had a very pleasant bathe this morning at Hog ; and we have begun to try and get the house in order for Diana in case she comes.

I am in a terror that she will hate the place ; now that we feel ourselves old inhabitants, the rapture has a little worn off, and we see more of the drawbacks. I dare say if we stayed on another month we should even be welcoming the " nice breeze." As it is, the noise and the ants and the chipmunks (cockroaches) seem the most noticeable features, and I am scared she will see these before the humming-birds, and the sun, and the hibiscus.

While I was typing I was suddenly told Walter Grant wanted to see me and, sure enough, there he was with an American friend in a buggy. I drove down with them to a shop on Bay Street, where we found Micky Macintyre closeted with two sinister men with a bottle on the ice and another on the table, discussing bootlegging business. I then went to Mr. Pritchard's, where I helped Walter to buy some sponges.

After dinner they called for us and drove us out to the Bahamian Club, a gambling den kept by one "Honest John Kelly," so-called, it is said, because he once returned a glass eye he found in the lavatory. We found a beautifully appointed gambling room. I hadn't a cent, so didn't play. Micky plastered the board every coup and finally brought off an *en plein* bet of

twenty-five dollars, winning some £200 at the coup. When he ended he was 1,000 dollars to the good.

We then went with them and had a bottle of champagne on their boat, a racer of Josh Cosden's, on which they were that night to make the journey to Miami in four hours.

Tuesday, January 20th. I didn't sleep much as I knew Diana's boat would be in early. I got up at 6.15, and when I got down to Rawson Square just before seven, the *Miami* was just coming in. I saw her figure from quite a way off.

As I was talking to her, before the passengers landed, up rushed Captain Fenton, very sleepy; however, he was very efficient with the luggage and the car, and drove us home. After a bad breakfast we took Diana into the town, which, thank Heaven, she adores, and did some shopping. Then caught the 10.30 Bobbie to Hog. A divine bathe with some snap-taking. After lunch she walked up to Fort Fincastle with me and at four we presented ourselves for tea at Government House. At five my Ford puffed up and I drove Diana to Lake Cunningham in the centre of the island over atrocious roads. She was a great deal nicer about my driving than Viola, though, perhaps rightly,

frankly nervous at my management of the car round a sharp corner overhanging a precipice.

When we got back, we went to Jack Adamson's studio to see the photographs of the *Dream*. Mine were a failure for the most part, but his were nice. We had a rum cocktail. Viola was dining with the Morosinis, so Diana and I dined together off a savoury stew consisting of onions, yams, and carrots, with canned corn-beef hash, and washed down by some Heidsieck kindly presented to us by Micky.



D ON HOG ISLAND.

Thursday, January

22nd. We did the morning's shopping and Diana wrote her name in the Governor's book. Then, at eleven, Morosini and Mrs. M., in a thick brown garment designed for an English winter and with brown goggles, called for us to take us out to

Old Fort. Arrived there, we found Dr. Dalton very fine in white plus fours and very agreeable. A boat arrived bearing a Mr. and Mrs. Selby and some of the Government House party. Diana commandeered Selby's Kodak. She said to him : " Can you tell me whose that Kodak is ? " He replied with a wry smile : " Yes, I can, it's mine." She then took it from him by force. We had a fine bathe.

Arrived back at the house we found water-melon, and two kinds of cocktails prepared by the hands of the Doctor. We then sat down to a memorable meal which began at one and ended, or rather fizzled out, at three. The table was as follows : Mrs. Dalton, me, Iva Dundas, Viola, Selby, Diana, the Doctor, Miss Carruthers, Fenton, Mrs. Selby, the Morosinis. The drinks, in addition to the Doctor's cocktails, were sherry, beer, Chianti and Crème de Menthe. The Counsellor was nursing some secret grief about the Daltons' boat and glared savagely and moodily at the company. The courses were (1) papaw, (2) lobster, (3) Porterhouse steak, i.e., sirloin of beef torn with an axe by the Doctor into gigantic ragged helpings, (4) salad and cheese, (5) mince-pies, (6) grape-fruit, (7) preserved ginger, (8) coffee. It was terrific, and the mixture of drinks threw an odd haze



D. IN THE VICTORIA GARDENS

over it all. Mrs. Dalton very restless, but I am bound to say very efficient ; the Doctor also restless, but nevertheless inefficient, except for his encounter with the Porterhouse.

Mrs. Morosini asked for water. The Doctor got up to get it, and Mrs. Dalton said, " Freeman, sit down."

The Doctor was edited at the other end of the table by Mrs. Dalton, who said that not only was he a great scholar, but also a great linguist and especially a speaker of Italian. The Doctor demurred modestly, but after a little, and during a hush in the conversation, he suddenly said in a hoarse voice and apropos of nothing, and with no pretence of anything but a Bahamian accent : "*Mia Bella Napoli.*" Mrs. Dalton beamed round like someone with a performing pet dog. The Counsellor groaned and drove his fork savagely into the lobster, which, indeed, was impossible to get out of its shell. Another pause, and the Doctor, warming to his work, said : "*Funicoli, Funicola.*" Mrs. Dalton applauded. The Counsellor gnawed his steak moodily.

At length the meal drew to a close with a fine array of liqueurs. Diana and I boarded Mr. Selby's boat, and, with the aid of Dr. Dalton and his glass-bottomed bucket, saw his private Marine Gardens.

In the evening Diana and I visited Mr. Jack Adamson at his studio and dined at home off cabbage stew, canned soup and canned cheese.

Friday, January 23rd. We were invited forth to lunch with Mrs. Devereux. At eleven the car called



D. AT MRS. DEVEREUX'S.

for us. Arrived there we at once undressed to bathe, and Mrs. Campbell told us she had seen eight sharks there that morning. However, the eight sharks' place had now been taken in the water by five fully-dressed niggers who were engaged in clearing the sea of weed, a process which was laborious but very badly needed.

The bathe was agony, the water being shallow

and churned up by the niggers. If one put one's foot down, one trod on a sponge or anemone or some horror. Mrs. Devereux sat on the bank and read her mail, occasionally shouting some remark which was quite inaudible.

Viola took a more biological view of the bathe and spent her whole time diving successfully for sea fans and sponges. One only saw the soles of her long pale feet above the surface of the water.

Diana and I escaped from the seething water and took a walk round the lovely grounds.

Lunch time came, bringing with it two enormous Americans, one called Prout, said to be very rich, and one called Hugh Jackson. Mrs. Campbell made some cocktails by the unusual process of setting out some neat gin to warm in the tropical sun.

"This should be taken in the wrist," said Prout, to whom we immediately became attached.

During the whole morning, Signor Morosini cruised on the edge of Mrs. Devereux's waters, killing the time until 3.15, when he was to call for us. The hostess begged Viola to sing "The Crimson Petal."

"Let's get it over," said Viola, in a ghastly aside to me.

We did so, while Jackson handed round the gin, offering Viola a glass during her best high note.

Lunch was good though, as usual, rather long. Finally, the impatience of the Counsellor broke all bounds, and he made his presence known and felt. We were whisked off to the boat, Dr. Dalton's famous boat, over which there had been so much heart-burning.

We sailed off ; a conch was broken up and we settled down to fishing. All the tackle was defective in various ways, except one line which was promptly bagged by the Captain. My hook was evidently meant for tarpon. Madame said a great many times she did not care about fishing, and even more often that she was glad it was calm ; a sentiment I agreed with heartily. The Captain hauled in two fish on his line ; an occasional bite was all anybody else could hope for, except the fish, who got rid of the dismembered conch in an astonishingly short time.

Our date for tea with Miss Massey on her island of Sandy Cay grew closer and closer, and from the distance we could see her enormous blue hat, beneath which she was doing a Sister Ann.

Madame M. got panic about getting home, and said fully fifty or sixty times that it was a question of the light. We finally got to the island, where a

pathetic tea was spread out. We got about fifteen minutes on the island till we were recalled by the frantic wavings of Madame, and her shouts which we could not hear, but of which we could guess the purpose. As we were getting into the boat Viola did a wonderful fall into the ocean and was hauled on to the boat like a vast fish, helpless with laughter.

"It's difficult getting into boats, I know," said the Counsellor.

"We must get home now," said Madame, "you see, it's a question of the light."

In the evening we dined with Captain Fenton at the Colonial Hotel. We got there half an hour late. He served us with an admirable dinner, after which we went down to the dancing room. My spirits were rising, and I was beginning to enjoy myself, but Diana said, in a sepulchral voice, that she wanted to go home. However, at that moment we were asked to join the party of an American financial magnate. We did so, and found an amazing collection of funnies sitting round a table in various stages of exhilaration. There was a Mr. White, very happy; a Mr. Bunting, delirious with joy; the magnate, a sinister man; the magnate's son, and others unnamed. Our Mr. Prout arrived, who, we were delighted to hear, had



D AND THE SKIPPER OFF SANDY CAY

said we were the three nicest people he had ever met.

After that the party seemed to go with a swing, and it was quite late when we left.

In the street we found three niggers leaning against a lamp-post, or rather, two of them were doing so, and one was astride an apparently non-working motor-bicycle. One carried a guitar ; another something wrapped in green baize which looked like a thermos but was, I think, a trumpet. They sang to us for a long time, during which none of them shifted by an inch their original positions. The nigger on the motor-cycle remained perched on it till the end—the end coming with a rush when Captain Fenton found his official position in the island weigh too heavily on him. But they sang us adorable Bahamian songs, some of which we have since mastered. One in particular we fancied :

Ballymeena, Ballymeena,
Ballymeena in the harbour, (bis)
Put Ballymeena in the dock,
Paint Ballymeena black, black, black. (bis)¹

¹ As in all the local songs, the words are founded on some actual, and usually, fairly recent event. This song concerns the owner of a vessel called the *Ballymeena*, who brought her into Nassau harbour, and, finding he could not pay the harbour dues, abandoned her there.

Diana made a date with the guitarist to attend her next day, but he never came, and she stayed an hour on the balcony looking out for her black Romeo.

Saturday, January 24th. A day of high wind. We chartered a boat called the *Eula J.*, and drove over to the extreme end of Hog Island by the Narrows, where there is a lovely sand beach and all kinds of unexpected conveniences such as huts and tables, with not a living soul, except a couple of niggers who cultivate a little immature sweet corn.

There we had a beautiful day, and a memorable bathe. We lunched finely in the hut off corned beef hash, washed down with sparkling Burgundy. The only fly in the ointment was the appearance of a snake, after which we could never take our eyes off our boots, though Viola was actually in favour of pursuing it.

In the evening was a dinner party at Government House, or as we have learnt to call it, G.H.

When we got there we found everyone decked out in medals, and sitting and standing about awkwardly. Cocktails were served round.

"Bottled," said Diana in a ghastly, rasping voice, which made everyone jump nervously.

Diana sat between H.E. and Captain Hillman, a gentleman of that kind of heartiness which is described in the House of Commons as "breezy."

After dinner, Viola, Diana and one of the guests named Major Cromwell went off to see a nigger joint, which I understand they enjoyed hugely.

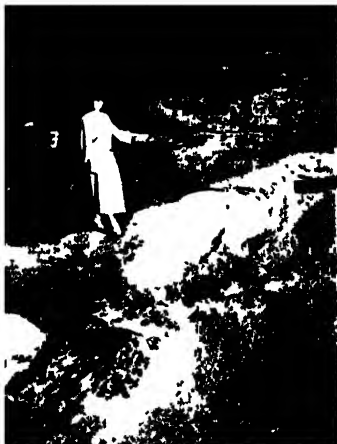
Later we all went to the Bahamian Club, where we had a fairly amusing time. I lost some money, which was a bore, but Diana, by some fine daring betting, got away with a little. We were the last to leave the club.

Sunday, January 25th. Very doubtful weather, and our turtle picnic at Sandy Cay seemed in jeopardy. Major Cromwell called for us in a Ford car, already occupied by himself and, roughly, 200 lbs. of ice, on which I was invited to sit. We got to his home somehow, where we found Captain Hillman and Mr. Bruce in the water. We all finally bathed, and enjoyed it, in spite of the Captain's trick of throwing a tennis ball at one the whole time.

Bruce drove us back, and we presented ourselves at Miss Massey's house, to which the picnic had been transferred. There we found, beside Miss Massey, Jack Adamson (part owner of the turtle),

Maurice, and Mr. and Mrs. Jordan, who were new to me.

The turtle, which we had faintly dreaded, turned



D IN JANE GALE'S CAVE

out to be an exquisite delicacy, though it made us "pass out" completely. Mrs. Jordan sang us some Bahamian songs which entranced us.

After lunch, almost insensible from surfeit of turtle, we were driven out to the west end of the island

by Maurice, to rather a lovely place called Jane Gale's Cave, where we took some snaps, and Diana did a perilous bathe in her dress. We heard later it was a well-known place for octopi. We drove home through the Pine Barren.

In the evening, "pot-luck" at Government House, which was pleasantly uneventful. Afterwards, H.E., Diana and I did a puzzle. H.E. was full of grim warnings about our trip to Andros on Dr. Dalton's boat.

Monday, January 26th. The day dawned deceitfully fine on our trip ; it was apparently perfect weather. We were to start at ten from the Maison Morosini, but what with elaborate packings and general muddlings we did not get there till eleven. Mrs. Morosini, who was rightly in high spirits at not coming, escorted us to the boat, explaining the secret of the commissariat. The drinks were Scotch and coco-nut milk, as usual.

We pushed out to sea full of foreboding ; a terrific lurch at the bar told me that now or never was the time to speak. The shores of New Providence were fading from sight, and nothing could be seen except a gigantic swell.



D AND THE SKIPPER'S ARM

Up I staggered, and said that I must be put on shore at once ; if necessary, I would swim from a safe distance. Diana very sweetly supported me, and it was agreed to abandon the more venturesome trip in favour of a visit to Rose Island, which was at least within sight of Nassau. The Counsellor was, I shall always believe, secretly relieved.

The crew consisted of Mr. William Riddell, of Hopetown, Abaco, and his son, Mr. Ripley Riddell. Dr. Dalton described Riddell as the finest captain in the Bahamas. That may or may not have been so ; the trouble with me was that he was completely inarticulate, his conversation consisting of sounds which no one could understand. They were apparently couched in the Abacan dialect, in which he and Ripley carried on querulous arguments.

We pushed off towards Rose Island, doing a little fishing on the way. As before, the fishing consisted of the captain taking the only serviceable line ; he got two fish, the rest, of course, was a blank.

We sat down to lunch in the cabin, a low room in which a dwarf would have bumped his head, and made untenable by the fumes of an oil stove, over which the girls had heroically cooked a vegetable stew. To add to our difficulties, Ripley joined us

at our lunch, sitting on the floor and whittling a nail with a file. It was not until he produced a large hand-saw that we ventured to protest.

"*Questo è troppo*," I said to our host.

We had a bathe, swimming from the ship to the island, in slight panic of sharks.

In the afternoon the same farce of fishing. At dusk we went ashore, Morosini proceeding as usual by water, and we in a completely crazy dinghy. We were then ordered to take a walk on the island.

Morosini and Viola strode off across a desolated region tenanted only by many million locusts and hermit crabs. After Diana had had twenty-nine severe bites from mosquitoes, and between us we had collected over one thousand burrs in our clothes, we retired to the wharf, where we saw to our ills. After a long interval they returned, and we went back to the ship, the order being once again Morosini and Viola by water, and Diana and I in the dinghy, which by then was all but submerged, and which we had the greatest difficulty in getting off the rocks. We paddled off to the boat, which we finally reached, after being much impeded by a vast searchlight with which Morosini raked the craft.

Dinner came. We descended into the fumes,

where the Captain had been cooking his own catch. We dined under much the same difficulties, only instead of Ripley we had this time Mr. Riddell as companion, who sat hunched up with his back to, and yet at, the table, his battered Panama hat on the back of his head, occasionally letting fall an incomprehensible word, and wiping a furtive tear from his eye when we sang a particular Bahamian song, of which he knew the words, or rather some strange outlandish words, which he made Viola repeat after him, "Captain Pig, he done ate up all of the grits," being all that I can now remember.¹

In the evening we thought we might fish. We asked the Captain's advice, which was of a non-committal character. We somehow crowded into the dinghy, where we let a line overboard without, of course, any result. I sat in the end of the boat, and did a little hopeless baling.

The sleeping problem now arose, and everyone talked at once, giving advice to the others. The Counsellor was, oddly, for sleeping on the wharf among the mosquitoes ; this was promptly vetoed. It was finally decided that we should all sleep on the

¹ It was from the second verse of the Bahamian song : " Hoist up the John B. sail."

deck—if two sharply sloping and railless boards can so be called. Mattresses and pillows were dragged up.

We lay down, and by universal request Diana recited us some poetry.

For a little while all went well beneath a sky of



D

innumerable stars ; suddenly a brisk wind sprung up, to which the boat responded by jogging merrily from side to side, and giving forth the most ear-splitting groans and creaks from her timbers. Diana slept peacefully, aloof and beautiful ; Morosini, Viola and I crowded into a shocking serried mass, and

tried to collect some warmth. We lay an hour in silence and misery.

"DESH it all," we suddenly heard, "we shall freeze to death."

The Counsellor sprang up, and returned with an armful of back numbers of *Le Temps* and the *Times Literary Supplement*, and plastered the boards with them. The pale face of Ripley, awakened from his beauty sleep, peered eerily at us over the hatch. I bore it a little longer, then decided that, "desh it all," I too must find some more wraps. I vaulted laboriously down into the cabin, but forgot matches, so that I took a quarter of an hour finding the switch. When the light finally leapt up, an enormous cockroach scurrying across the table and a deep groan from Ripley made me turn tail, with nothing gained but a pair of flannel trousers. Diana slept on. The Counsellor groaned and heaved from side to side. I only slumbered twice: once I awoke to find my father's silver flask just disappearing into the ocean, and the second time to find that I had slipped down the perilous slope and was just disappearing myself. After that there was no sleep for me.

When the tocsin sounded about 6.45 and the roll-call was mustered, I calculated that sleep had been

divided approximately as follows : Diana and William Riddell, eight hours ; Ripley Riddell, seven and a half hours ; Viola four hours ; Morosini half an hour ; and I ten minutes.

We got up, disentangling ourselves from the files



D OFF SANDY CAY

of *Le Temps*. The sun had not risen, but the Counsellor flung himself moodily into the ocean, landed, and disappeared from sight over the horizon of the island. The girls prepared a fine breakfast of buttered eggs and chops ; the cabin stank like a pest-house.

Later we moved off under sail, the only difference being that Ripley would from time to time release the

sail in the high wind, with the result that in swinging across it nearly decapitated whoever happened to be there. More futile fishing was indulged in ; owing, I think, to my stealing the Captain's line when he was not looking, I managed to hook a sad-looking flat-fish.

We tried to land at Salt Cay ; that is to say, Ripley cast the anchor overboard in the roughest sea. Everything slithered about—the Kodaks, the shoes, the puzzle books. We had ourselves to cling to the mast to stay on board at all. Diana's Mexican hat blew off, together with a snowstorm of foreign newspapers. The anchor was raised, and with prayer and thanksgiving we turned towards the familiar shores of Hog Island, where we finally landed in approved fashion—Morosini and Viola by water and Diana and I in the dinghy.

Everything was going up and down before my eyes and I was weak from suppressed nausea, but I flung myself in the ocean, and partially recovered. Morosini and Viola went off for one of their island walks, but this time Diana and I knew better : we stayed on the beach and did a little photography with the miraculously salvaged Kodaks.

Finally at 12.30 we turned our noses home to Nassau and on the wharf was Madame M. in her brown

uniform, repeating over and over again that she could not believe her eyes and that she did not expect us till nine.



A PICNIC ON SANDY CAY

So ended our fishing trip to Andros.

We got home to lunch, and all the afternoon I stayed at home, with the ground still heaving up and down before my eyes. At about six we ventured forth to Mr. Adamson's studio, where with the help

of Mr. Stephen Farnham and his ukulele we sang a lot of Bahamian songs and learnt some new ones.

Wednesday, January 28th. The morning we spent in a pleasant old-fashioned manner at Hog Island, bathing. At twelve Jack Adamson, from whom we are now, as it seems, inseparable, called for us in the *Tuna Fish*, a boat about the size of Dr. Dalton's, and with a charming and experienced negro for captain.

We steamed off to Sandy Cay, Adamson taking a machine-gun battery of snaps of Diana with any camera he could lay his hands on. When we got to the island, which was looking quite wonderful, he took a great many more. We had a nice lunch of egg sandwiches, heavily spiced with onion, and beer. The hermit-crabs crowded round us in thousands. After lunch we did some fishing for barracuta, which, oddly enough, was unsuccessful. Adamson took a lot of snaps of Diana fishing.

Arrived home we hurried off to Government House for choir practice ; that is to say, we sang over and over again, sometimes with accompaniment (shaky, by myself), sometimes without, sometimes with movement, sometimes without, a song about the Trade Winds—words by Mr. Masfield, music by a Mr.

Keel. We heard afterwards that H.E. had (rightly) forbidden a further repetition of Mr. Keel's melody.

There were present Lady Strafford, who stitched busily at laurel leaves, at Viola's direction, and her daughter, Lady Mary Byng.

I telephoned to the restaurant of Miss Draper, to enquire whether we could dine there.

Mrs. Bruce showed us her fancy dress, which consisted of one yard of material, trimmed with convolvulus and weighted by tenths-of-a-penny (Nigerian), a relic of Bruce's former official position there.

We called at Miss Draper's where we enquired of a distinguished guest whether we could dine. That was a bad start, and it was not much better when we finally dug out Miss Draper, for she was stern and uncompromising. Suddenly a jack-in-the-box appearance from our old *deus ex machinâ*, Jack, who said :

"All right, Auntie, I'll see them through ; don't worry."

Miss Draper retired appeased.

We were taken down, where we fed very well off the leavings of others : fish cakes, beef, vanilla ice and Benedictine. The bill was never brought, though

I fancy it is only a temporary respite,¹ and were led to Jack's studio, where he developed the snaps in a stifling dark room, made more so by the presence of his lodger, Mr. Woodcock, and later by that of his coloured factotum, named Simeon.

Thursday, January 29th. This was the day of our great Bacchanalian fancy dress picnic at Old Port, the invitations having been sent out in our name, very unequally, by Captain Fenton, so that the whole town is seething with discontent and jealousy as to who have and who have not been asked. Even Bertram France has turned surly, and has concocted a story that Mrs. Stoncham's bulldog, Morette, stepped on his big toe. In his turn, Bunting had his big toe trodden on by Bertram France.

We went out early to buy the innumerable necessities contingent on fancy dress, plus the difficulty of sandwiches. We met the Daltons in the street. After Mrs. Dalton had touched on a wide variety of subjects we enquired whether we should build a fancy dress for the Doctor.

"Oh, I must tell you," said Mrs. Dalton, "but

¹ It wasn't. Jack, with his usual generosity, had arranged everything for us.

first let me tell you . . ." (an odd trick she has of getting ahead of herself with her stories)—" the Doctor has been looking up all the quotations—we've all the old books you know—and he's going to fire off sayings from Bacchus and Sappo (*sic*) at you ; and I want to tell you, he's got a long stick—the Doctor knows the name, I don't, I'm not a scholar ; the Doctor is, and he's going to tie something on it—I forget the name, but the Doctor knows it."

At this very moment the Doctor staggered out of the Ice House, weighed down with a gigantic block of ice, which he was nursing in his arms and which was pouring in a stream down his suit of ducks. He supplied the name of the long stick, but was exercised in his mind as to whether he could get the necessary labour to pick green corn to tie to the end of it. We did not press him as to the quotations from " Sappo," and I am looking forward most of all to his firing them at me. In the back of the car was a colossal turkey.

We had a varied and difficult morning. First to the Colonial, where we found Fenton ; then to the garden of G.H., where we picked bougainvillea ; then, even again, to Jack's studio, where we were this time initiated into the mystery of printing the snaps, con-

ducted by Jack and Miss Gray in a subterranean chamber.

We staggered home late and tired, for lunch, where we ate our national dish, vegetable stew, washed down by canned figs.

Diana took exception to what she called my "gone native" habits, and took a photo of me to send home. Suddenly I found her pouring a carafe of water over her stockinged legs because, she said they were too hot. This seemed to me in true "White Cargo" style.

The whole afternoon was given over to dressing for the party. Diana

Painted Viola's legs and arms with a concoction of ink and iodine, and in doing so upset a bottle of ink over the bath. Diana cut me out a fine dress of magenta hue, under which I carry a new one-piece bathing dress purchased from my landlord in the



"GONE NATIVE"

morning. The whole place is strewn with tattered bougainvillea : rumours reach us of other dresses : we hear that Fenton has scoured the town for brown powder. . . . We have made wreaths for Mr. and Mrs. Maurice. . . . At a more than usually awkward moment, the soft voice of Miss Massey was heard on the balcony, asking whether her dress was suitable—a gipsy concoction, heavily weighed down, à la Bruce, with copper coinage. . . . Major Cromwell is coming as a Scythian warrior, of which dress the main features are a tub on the head and cricket pads on the arms. It should be fiercely hot, for the day is grilling, with the wind due south. . . . Lady Cordeaux is bringing an insect gun to shoot the Doctor's sand-flies. . . . We surprised Lady Strafford in the draper's. . . . Morosini will only come if he is allowed to wear flannels. . . . We hope Mrs. Morosini will be Mary Queen of Scots. . . . The whole town is, in fact, agog.

Friday, January 30th. Well, the great party is over, and I am sure I have never enjoyed anything so much and probably never will again. The order of it was as follows :

At 5.45 we drove to Jack's, where he made us a cocktail. We got a bad start here by the light being

suddenly obscured by the colossal figure of Bertram France standing in the doorway, very surly and crusty about the party, and bent on the commonplace task of getting his films. I greatly admired the skill with which Jack combined his rôles of professional photo-monger and private barman.

We did not stay there long, but pushed off in one of the island Fords. We got to Old Fort about 7. The place was looking indescribably lovely : down below amongst the coco-nut trees flares had been lit, and the trees looked strange and beautiful in the glare. On the shore the Doctor had prepared a gigantic bonfire, consisting of an old wreck that had been used for the movies. The patio was laid with small tables lit by red candles ; not a breath of wind stirred the air. Diana and I were leaning on the parapet gazing at it all, when we heard a shrill cry behind us of :

“ Look at me ! Look at me !

Exit from the house, Mrs. Dalton, clad in a leopard's skin, with vine leaves in her hair.

Then, “ Look at the Doctor ! ”

And there he was, bless him, also in a leopard's skin and also with vine leaves on his white poll, and carrying the famous long stick of which Mrs. Dalton did not know the name !

Preparations were hurried on : the drink table looked a bit meagre, but we added to it two bottles of Vermouth and a bottle of Canadian whisky, which I fear was poison, and may have been the cause for the subsequent carrying off of one of the guests on a stretcher.

Guests began to dribble in : Mr. and Mrs. Maurice, the former sporting a bougainvillea wreath, which suffered a good many sea changes during the night ; the Dean, not dressed, so that a wreath had to be made for him, impromptu ; Bruce, in flannels ; Mrs. Bruce, weighed down by Nigerian coinage ; Morosini, in flannels (no Mrs. M.) ; Prout, gigantic and beaming in white plus fours ; Selby, a sheikh, Mrs. Selby, Heaven knows what ; Fenton as Lysander ; Iva Dundas, looking sweet in a leopard skin and a vast poke bonnet of lily leaves, which Viola and Diana fell on and plucked.

The two set pieces were H. S. Lamb, a cravat fastened round his head with a vast Monarch of the Glen pin, his wife's chemise, and a timepiece hung on a chain round his neck, and a long white cloak ; and our old friend Major Cromwell, on his head a funnel, out of which protruded an aigrette, on his stomach a dish-cover kept in position by a multitude of straps, cricket pads on his arms, the hairiest of cricket gloves

on his fingers, his wife's red Spanish shawl for a skirt, football stockings, heavily gartered—a truly wonderful



Scythian warrior.

We warmed greatly to him during the evening, partly on account of his get-up, and partly by his musical skill on a strange unknown instrument, and on the drum which he made of his dish-cover.

Then there was a divine creature, six foot high with a lovely face, called Mrs. Mason, who played finely on the uke.

Things got under way: Diana steered the orchestra, consisting of Jack, Stephen, Jordan and Duncan, into a corner, where we started a beautiful concert.

We had brought a single bottle of champagne, called Micky : a more wonderful bottle was never known ; the widow's cruse was nothing to it. We hid it behind a large tub, and took surreptitious swigs at it, but finding it never gave out, we began to offer it to others. Finally, as I was contemplating feeding the whole party on it, " Micky " gave out with a grunt. We sang all the songs we knew and a lot we didn't ; the crowd began to collect round us, though certain tables went on having a sit-down supper, for all the world as if it were Londonderry House and the deafening din not going on. We were by that time thoroughly happy.

The Doctor went down to the beach and set fire to the wreck ; the moment had come for the dance that Viola and Diana were to do amongst the palms below. The question was, how to get the party down. Finally, Stephen and Jordan did a " Pied Piper," and lured them down to the strains of " Ballymeena." The party marched down most decorously in couples, Maurice's wreath having, by this time, got lodged over his right eye. The audience was placed on the hillside.

Viola made her short speech, explaining the impromptu nature of the show ; Diana, looking far more

lovely than anything mortal has a right to look, took up her position on a vast barrel; and Viola, attired as a faun, and looking marvellous with her ink and iodine patches, darted out and skipped round her. The orchestra at first mistook their cue, and set up a crashing din with a Bahamian drinking song; on being told that a low thrumming was all that was wanted they complied with exactly what was right, and the dance began. This I will not and could never attempt to describe; it was the most beautiful thing I have ever seen, and that is all I can say. And H.E. thought so too, for he said so with emotion; the Dean said so, and Lady Cordeaux was as deeply moved as I was myself.

At the end of it the dancers led the way to the beach, now brightly lit by the flaming wreck. Diana and Viola danced into the sea, completing a picture of the most eerie and unearthly beauty; half the audience followed them.

The tension was released. Another concert was started, during the course of which Mrs. Dalton did an amazing *pas seul à la Maud Allan*, by the edge of the sea. The choir, rather depleted by the absence of some of its members, notably Fenton, who was engaged elsewhere, took up its stand, and rendered Mr. Keel's ditty about the Trade Winds. This was in the nature

of an anti-climax, partly because H.E. said he hated it worse than any tune except the Barcarolle, partly because no one knew the melancholy song, and partly because Mr. Duncan smoked a cigarette all the way through his part. But it was soon over.

It must have been late when the party began to break up. Diana and I crowded into Jordan's car with Jack, Mrs. Jordan and someone else. We drove back the twelve miles in record speed, taking the sharp corners on one wheel, and what would ordinarily have seemed crazy now seemed merely exhilarating. We drove to their house, the locality of which I have never discovered; it appeared to be about the size of Dorchester House, and had a ballroom, where there was dancing, but the cream of the party was in the pantry, where there was more singing.

Finally the great evening came to an end, and our last vision was Mrs. Mason fully togged out in her husband's clothes. I fear she was a little snubbed, but the transformation had come too late, and everyone was for bed.

Friday, January 30th. Spent a quiet morning pottering round the town, and had what we imagined was our farewell vegetable stew at home.

When we got down to the *Miami* with luggage,

we found that owing to some typical American red tape, such as I experienced in Cuba, Diana's name was not on the manifest, and she was told she could not sail.



ORDERING THE VEGETABLES IN THE
MARKET

She behaved admirably under the most difficult and trying circumstances, rendered trebly difficult (1) by a man who took at least a dozen snaps of her with a diminutive kodak during her fifteen minutes of agony, and (2) by some pests of nigger boys, who were convinced that what she really needed at that moment was a "shine."

There was a most offensive American at the gangway, who did nothing to help except suggesting the American Consul, which we found after was a silly suggestion, but Major Hillman, who for some unexplained reason was there, took off Viola and Morosini, who had also turned

up, at breakneck pace to the other end of the island to look for the Consul, whose office was actually adjoining the dock, but who was anyhow shut up, as Friday and Saturday both seem to be holidays here. Diana meanwhile appealed to the Captain, who was even more offensive. The *Miami* finally pushed off, leaving Diana and her luggage sadly on the wharf.

It was, of course, lovely to have her for two more days, but it was easy to feel for her tears of vexation at the upset of her plans and the gross discourtesy with which she had been treated.

In the evening, there being the usual Mother Hubbard at home, we went to dine at an obscure hotel, the most amazing place, very like the hotel in *Victory* with an orchestra raising hell in an alcove, and a few bar crawlers having drinks. We ordered dinner, which was evidently quite a new experience for them. After a long wait a negress brought us a steak, consisting of a whole side of a horse, filling an enormous platter. We gave it to a pariah dog, who was sneaking round the table and received it incredulously.

The rest of dinner was spent talking to a Miss Mildred Dudley, who was also sneaking round us : she was a peroxidized lass who was a telephone operator

at the Colonial. She told us all her troubles : how she hated the place ; how she couldn't go with a boy because her boy in New York didn't like it ; how the girls were lined up in the morning and lectured on purity and drink. It was more Victoryesque than ever.

Here is the " Social and Personal " paragraph of this week's *Guardian* :

" His Excellency the Governor and Lady Cordeaux were at home on Wednesday afternoon in Government House garden. A number of American visitors were among those present. The Police Band was in attendance "

" One of the most original and thoroughly enjoyable entertainments ever given on this island was an evening picnic arranged by Miss Viola Tree on Thursday, at Old Fort. Most of the guests appeared in Greek costume or other fancy dress, and from start to finish the party went with a swing. An impromptu amateur orchestra led the singing of local ditties and played for dancing, and everybody entered into the spirit of the occasion. After supper on the terrace under the big silk cotton tree the entire company marched in procession to the beach, which was illuminated with bonfires, and here, in an indescribably beautiful setting, an improvised pantomime was charmingly acted by Lady Diana Manners and Miss Viola Tree, who for the time being were " translated " into bewitching nymphs—equally at home in wood or sea—and Miss Iva Dundas, who, in her tiger skin costume, fitted appropriately into the woodland scene. No more lovely spot could have been found anywhere for this unusual performance than the jungle of coco-

nut palms in the picturesque cove of Old Fort, with an expanse of shimmering sea beyond, and all of the guests are very much indebted to Miss Tree and Lady Diana for giving them the opportunity of enjoying such an artistic and unique entertainment. His Excellency the Governor and Lady Cordeaux, who were accompanied by the Countess of Strafford and Lady Mary Byng, were among the large number present. Dr. and Mrs. Dalton, with their usual hospitality, lent valuable assistance in the arrangements for this very successful party."

"Mrs. Arthur Sweeting gave a turtle supper in honour of Miss Caroline Golling on Thursday evening and the party of about twenty young people finished up the evening at the New Colonial."

"Lady Diana Cooper expects to sail for Miami to-morrow evening in the s.s. *Collier County*."

"The Rev. H. W. Weigall, who has been very ill lately, is going home to England together with the Ven. Audley J. Browne and the Rev. C. Duquenoy on April 22nd, via Jamaica."

Saturday, January 31st. We had a date to lunch with the Scotts at the Porcupine. When we got down to the dock at 10.30, Scott suggested it might be well for Diana to go to the shipping offices, to prevent a further recurrence of trouble. We did so, thinking we could get it over in half-an-hour and catch the 11 boat. There was Mr. Barney de Brock, a local char-

acter, who was slowly questioning a Spanish gentleman as to whether he was a polygamist, and more slowly typing down his replies, and even more slowly rubbing it all out with an eraser, which he kept on losing.

It was all too Bahamian for words, so we asked whether we might come back in the afternoon.



THE BATHING BEACH, HOG ISLAND

"Yes, but please, please don't come between 2 and 3," said Barney.

I recognized the true Civil Servant touch.

We just caught the boat to the Porcupine, where we had a bathe in a very rough sea, which was pleasant at the time, but left us very chilly afterwards.

Lunch was quite pleasant, the cooking being the best on the island. When presented to Diana, Stoneham said :

"We've had that pleasure. I say 'we' ; you see I'm crazy about myself."

Mrs. Scott subsequently said her husband was

"pinning roses on himself," and we finally induced Mrs. Stoneham to say "Ä-pri-cöt brandy," which after so much waiting for it gave us a *fou rire*.

At 3.15 we re-presented ourselves at Barney's, where he typed and erased and re-typed Diana's replies, and then broke the news that she must have a passport. Bruce had to be rung up, and the Colonial Office—or whatever it is called—had to be specially opened in order to provide her with a new passport, which was a fine document, beginning: "We, Sir Harry Edward Spiller Cordeaux, Knight of the Most Honourable Order, etc., etc." Diana is now in the most illegal position of having two perfectly good passports.

Even when we had got it, Barney and the Consul between them wasted the afternoon till 5.30, by which time we were fit to drop. We called to see the Stonehams, where was a large collection of people, and later we dined with the Scotts at the Victoria. Then to the Colonial, where we found a quantity of our island friends and began to enjoy ourselves.

In the morning we were conscious of having behaved a little badly, notably in forcibly detaining Stephen in the bar and making him sing our favourite song to the barman. The words of this song are :

"The dog's got the measles,
The cat's got the fever,
The hawg's got the whooping cough;
I ain't going to Germany,
And I ain't going to fight no war;
I ain't going to marry,
And I ain't going to settle down (bis);
Every time she shimmies there's a poor
man's dollar gone;
Yes, gone."

Sunday, February 1st. We all woke in a state of great depression; Viola and I at the thought of really losing Diana, and she at the thought of the N.E. wind which was blowing very briskly. We were motored out to the Daltons by the Morosinis; here we found to our grief the Dr. gone on a cruise, and Mrs. Dalton worrying about a dish of lobster she was preparing. We had a bathe in the ocean, which was rough and cold and dirty, and our gloom got worse.

Lunch was at three small tables. Viola asked Mrs. Dalton whether she would put us between people we knew. "Yes," said Mrs. Dalton, with a wild geniality, and at the same time arranging the cards so that Diana had Mrs. Deacon and Captain Chandler, and I got Mrs. Silver and Mrs. Barnes. We had a wild idea of rearranging all the cards, but did not dare. There were many more women than men—so Mrs. Dalton



put two sad-looking men next each other. When we had taken our oddly assorted places, and we were looking appealingly at her, she made us all stand up, surveyed her handiwork with a roving eye, said: "That will do," and sat down with a crash.

Mrs. Barnes chatted away about Mormons, while my eye wandered to the other tables.

We left soon after lunch, Mrs. Silver and the sad-looking man, whom I addressed wrongly as Mr. Silver, giving us a lift home. I sank into coma in the car, ruined by waking dreams that he was talking to me, and that I must reply.

When we got home, Diana's little bag containing money and passport was lost, and it began to look as if we should have to ask Bruce to re-open his Office to issue her a third passport ; but it was finally found under her pillow.

In the evening we went to take "pot-luck" with a nice American called Mrs. Churchill. There the chief feature was the most intoxicated man I have ever seen about to start dinner, who called Diana "Lady Di," and held his cocktail at an oblique angle over Viola's dress. We got the other side of the table to him at dinner and he quieted down a little.

We left immediately after to take Diana to the boat.

Jordan and Jack drove us down, a depressed little crew, and finally she went off sadly in the good ship, *Autogeo*.

We sank to bed and to sleep, only to be wakened by the clanging of the fire engines. We got out on to the verandah and found a great glare in the sky. Tired as we were, we walked up to the scene, where we found two houses burning fiercely. There was a man in a straw hat, standing on a ladder in the heart of the flames and hosing ; one would have thought straw an inflammable material, but he preserved it on his head to the end, and it was due to him that the flames were finally got under. The whole population of the island had meanwhile arrived to watch.

Monday, February 2nd. A day of inertia and reaction after Diana's departure, only wandering round the town, getting the last of our money, paying bills, etc. We dined at home off a real Mother Hubbard.

Tuesday, February 3rd. Viola made friends with the local lawyer and made the extraordinary date to go and see Lake Killarney with him at 8.30 a.m. Punctually to the moment he arrived in the inevitable Ford.

He rejoiced in the Oppenheimesque name of Arbuthnot Longworth. We drove at this unearthly hour to the lake, which amazed me by being the size of Windermere ; otherwise, there was nothing to see, but by then the craze for sight-seeing had come on them, and nothing would stop them but they must go



V IN JANE GALE'S CAVE

round the island. Having lived there for a year, neither of them had before ventured out of Nassau.

We showed them Jane Gale's Cave and the Pine Barren. I then said I would like to see the Mermaid's Pool. He said he knew the turning ; I, knowing the map, was sure he was wrong, but weakly let him lead us through a mile of virgin forest. When we were in the middle, he said, " Look at that bird of paradise."

I was much excited, knowing that this fowl was found in Trinidad. With trembling finger he pointed to a humming bird—(Mr. H.B., as H.E. calls it) ; I suggested it was the latter. " God bless my soul, so it is," said Longworth.

We then went up to G.H. where the girls and Fenton drove us out to the golf club. We bathed and had a sandwich lunch on the beach. After that, I played 12 holes with Fenton.

In the evening we dined with the Cromwells. The dinner was a revelation ; cocktails, white wine, 4 bottles of Krug and brandy. Captain Hillman was very hot and very noisy. After dinner Cromwell showed more of his musical versatility by playing the piano with one hand and the queer thing he played at our party with the other. During dinner, 3 niggers from Foxhill sang and played to us. An amusing evening.

Wednesday, February 4th. In the morning we had our final bathe at Hog. It was rather windy and cold. We walked over to the Porcupine to join the Morosinis, who had offered us lunch. There we found Morosini, as usual, in the ocean, and Mrs. M. wrapped up to the eyes with a thick motoring veil round her face.

She told me many times that it was her idea having lunch there, and many times I said it was a good idea. At 5 we went out to the Cromwells, where Viola bathed.

Dinner at G.H., and afterwards a picnic on "The Tramp," to the Narrows; the G.H. party plus Duncan and his uke. The Riddells steered us there with difficulty, while Duncan played and sang to us. Viola bathed a third time. It was latish when we got back, and the weather looked forbidding and stormy.

I don't think we were, either of us, in a state of mind to enjoy the evening much. The thought of leaving Nassau next day weighed too heavily on us. We could hardly speak of it even to each other, but we talked a little of how wonderfully kind everybody had been to us, from the highest to the lowest. We had been made to feel so absolutely at home at G.H. from the very first day by Their Excellencies, Iva Dundas and Fenton, and the absolutely informal and friendly atmosphere there had made up entirely for what one might in other circumstances have missed. The dwellers in Nassau—the Maurices, the Daltons, Miss Massey, Jack Adamson and countless others did everything to make our time a happy one, and also we

made some real friends among the American Colony. It was, indeed, a lucky chance which directed our steps towards this fortunate island. . . .

Thursday, February 5th. Our last day in beloved Nassau. We woke with heavy hearts to find a wild north-wester blowing and the ocean very bleak and forbidding. The day was spent in farewells to G.H., Stonehams, Jack and all friends. We went up sadly to a farewell tea at G.H.; Lady Cordeaux hung round Viola's neck: even

H.E. appeared moved. We had a last rum cocktail with Maurice, and a last Martini with Stoneham. Our last dinner was with the Scotts at the Victoria; the same food laboriously written down on "check" by Scott, and the same bottle of yellow wine.



A P AT CLIFTON BLUFF

It was sad saying good-bye to them, for we had become really attached ; Scott pressed a flask of fine brandy into my hands for the journey. It was the night of the G.H. ball, and everyone was preparing for it. Stoneham we had found marvellously dolled up in full gala, and saying, "Grace, I guess we'd better have a little one before we start."

We said good-bye to the Summers and started off for the wharf through the deserted streets. There we found the solitary figure of Miss Massey, huge blue hat and all, murmuring in her soft voice that she had turtle the next day, and chowder the day after, and what a pity it was we couldn't stay. It was all too painful, and I persuaded the skipper of the *Autogo* to take us off.

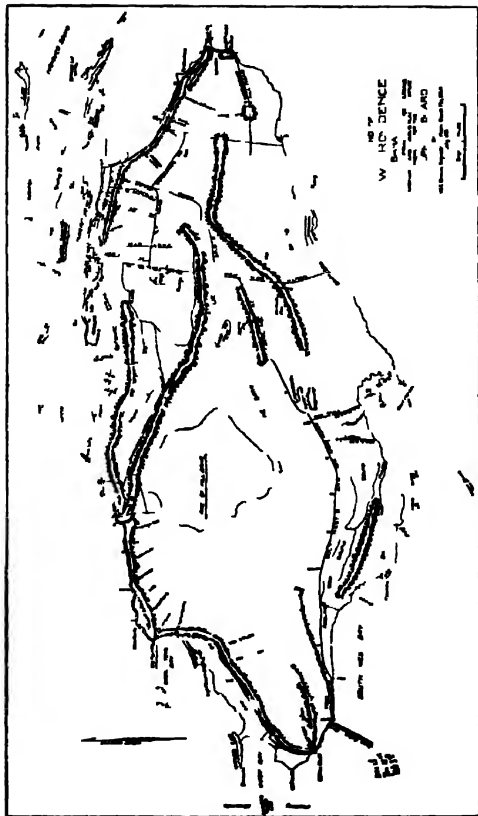
I could have howled. The band was playing in the Colonial garden, and it all looked so beautiful and calm. I felt I could never face the empty world again. It was like leaving a part of oneself behind, a bit of youth miraculously snatched out of middle age.

Looking back at it all, I find myself wondering whether some of it ever really happened at all. Did the girls ever really dance in the light of the bonfire beneath the coco-nut palms ? When it all seems too unreal, I put my hand in the pocket of my "trench

coat," and there I find a withered and tattered wreath of bougainvillea. . . .

We boarded the *County Collier* and were delighted to find a nice cabin on a beautifully clean yacht. I resisted the temptation to stay on deck and sentimentalize further, and fell into bed.

We pushed off about 11 ; she gave one terrific lurch as we passed over the bar, and then behaved like a lamb ; we slept through sheer fatigue, and the last thing I heard was " The Star Spangled Banner," and " God Save the King " floating across the harbour. Such was our good-bye to Nassau.



THE ISLAND OF NEW PROVIDENCE

PART IV

PALM BEACH, NEW YORK AND HOME

PALM BEACH, NEW YORK AND HOME

Friday, February 6th. A lovely morning of hot sun and calm sea ; we sat out on the deck and had a very good lunch. We neared Miami about 4. There was one comic incident. Scott had told me to conceal the flask on Viola's person, so with great secrecy I popped it, as I thought, behind her blouse. It fell on to the deck with the most appalling crash, making everyone laugh ; it also dented itself so much that it started to leak in its hiding place and has leaked ever since. When we got there, we were humiliated by having to undergo even another examination for trachoma ; then the luggage was thrown out on to the sand, and examined with meticulous thoroughness there.

We finally got a taxi, and drove once again over the "million dollar causeway" to our old haunt. There we found a scene of amazing confusion ; doors banging in the wind, children yelling in the passage, and Baby maundering about dollars and why she hadn't sent

on our mail. We escaped into the street; the whole beach had been turned into one vast fair and looked ghastly. The contrast to Nassau was excruciating.

We bought food for the evening, ate it on Baby's bed—which she had said we might have for the two nights—and fell early into it.

Saturday, February 7th. Hardly were we up when Baby rushed in, wild and distraught, saying we must leave at once, as her new lodgers had arrived, and it was a question of dollars to her. Thousands of children collected in the passage; Zita ran to and fro with a broom, the door banged incessantly.

We tried to telephone to Diana at Palm Beach, but little happened except that we put the telephone out of commission for a queue of people who were waiting, and Viola denounced the American telephone system to them, telling them that in England we could get a trunk call (they did not know what she meant) for a penny, which I confess is not my experience. Then we tried to telephone to Miami for rooms, but by that time we had hopelessly broken the machine. We left the luggage piled up in the hall and set out for Miami. The first person we met in the street was my old friend

Mr. Anderson, of the Golden Beach Office. With many winks he told me he had a parcel for me, gave me a fine bottle of Gilbey's gin, and after a lot of gratuitous trouble got us a room at the vast Hotel called the El Commodore.

It was typical of the immense trouble that an American, from his innate sense of hospitality, will take to help the stranger in his land. It wasted quite 20 minutes of his time, but he made us feel he enjoyed doing it for us.

That night we dined at the Hotel, and had quite a good dinner. We were on the 14th floor, and I have to confess that Miami looked beautiful under the full moon.

Sunday, February 8th. We got up early to catch the 8 o'clock train to Palm Beach. Breakfast on the train. We got there about 10.30, took a taxi and told the man to drive us to the gay scenes. He threw us out at an appalling place called Gus's Baths; there was a thick fog, it was raining, and a gale was blowing.

Palm Beach was the place of all others I had dreamt of for years; it was a bad start. Deep depression entered our souls; we walked along the front till we

got to the Breakers Hotel.¹ This looked much more enlivening, and on the way the sun began to come out. There I telephoned to Diana, and made a date with her major-domo to meet him at the station to fix the difficult luggage complexes. This we did with great ease and competency: I was fired with admiration for the American system of "checking" baggage.

Then Viola and I hired two bicycles and pedalled about seeking a place to lunch. Mine was very difficult to manage, as it had no brake, and the handles drooped down to the ground, also I found I broke every rule of the road, bicycling in places reserved for automobiles or pedestrians.

The sun had come out finely, and was blazing with tropic fury. We settled down at a place called the Daneli, and had the very best food we had yet found in America; deep-sea scallops and Virginia ham. It was perfectly lovely sitting in the garden, and our spirits rose.

We then rode back to the Breakers, where we found an old Nassau crony called Arnold, who gave us a card to the Everglades Club, of which Scott had told me much, and the Whitehall Club. We gave up our

¹ This Hotel was burned to the ground in March.

bicycles, which had cost us the moderate price of 4 dollars, and started to walk to the Everglades, which turned out to be miles away, or, as they so quaintly put it, 30 blocks down. We were exhausted when we got there, but came to very quickly in the lovely garden looking out over the lake. We had tea, and the band



EVERGLADES CLUB, PALM BEACH.

played to us. The wind had dropped, and it looked very lovely. We mounted to the roof and took some photographs.

We decided to dine at the huge Poinciana Hotel, made entirely of wood, 1,800 rooms, and covering several acres of ground. There we had a good dinner, some charming nigs singing to us all the best songs.

Before dinner we had a long 2-dollar ride in a sedan chair, a coloured gentleman bicycling behind, and propelling us very slowly, with much bell-ringing.

After dinner we sat romantically on the edge of the lake. There was apparently a shoal of tarpon where we were sitting, for huge fish would constantly hurl themselves out of the water with the noise of a man diving. Viola could, finally, bear it no longer, and ran off on a fruitless errand to try and get tackle.

At about 11 we walked to the station, and settled down with the luggage into our "drawing-room."

At midnight we pushed off for West Palm Beach, where we awaited the arrival of Diana. Trains of enormous length were spread over every line; about 1 a prodigious honking was heard which I felt sure was the arrival of Diana. So it was. By continued honking she bodily removed a train which was blocking her path, and the next thing I saw was her well-known figure advancing up the platform.

We left on the long journey north about 2 o'clock.

Monday, February 9th. Woke at dawn in a state of great excitement. For years I had studied the map of America and had thought that even if I were ever, by any lucky chance, to see New York, I should never see the Southern States. It seemed too good to be true that I should really be seeing something of America, if only through the window of a railway carriage.

A more hideous disillusionment could not be imagined ; they have managed to run the whole line through the low-lying swamp near the coast—there was absolutely nothing to be seen.

The country seemed like devastated and flooded areas—even Virginia, which had always meant all that was most romantic to me, seemed hideous. I kept saying to myself, “ You are really in Georgia ; ” “ Now you are in S. Carolina,” and remembering scraps of song about “ Marching through Georgia,” or “ South Carolina is a sultry clime ” (it wasn’t), but everything was, unfortunately, awful. Palms gave way to pines, slush to snow ; a thick mist enveloped all.

I hopped out at all the big stations—Jacksonville, Savannah, Richmond ; but even in the cities there was little to see except garbage and refuse.

It was a terrible disappointment.

Tuesday, February 10th. Passed Washington, Philadelphia and Baltimore; still the same miserable country. Got to N.Y. about 4. There we found Morris Gest, handsome, distinguished and princely. He took command of the luggage question, leaving his staff to deal with it, and whisked us off with him.

I was tremendously impressed by the station, vast and awe-inspiring and absolutely silent, everyone seeming to talk in whispers. It seemed like a cathedral. Everything there except a train, as Arnold Bennett said. We drove to the house in E. 71st St., where we were to lodge. Here was the first set-back. A bedroom had been prepared for Diana and Viola, but there was no provision for me. We rang up Stephen Partridge, who had wired to me, in Nassau asking me to stay with him, and he said he would take me in. I drove with Diana first to some friend's flat, where we purloined half a bottle of gin, and then I went on to Stephen's. He made me completely at home.

Wednesday, February 11th. Reached the girls



MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS AND CITY HALL NEW YORK

about 10. Went out with Viola into the streets of New York, and spent rather a hopeless morning; it was raining and very cold. Most of the morning we spent at Miss Marbury's office, where we tried to recapture a cable which had gone astray. I met Diana at the Ambassador at 12.30, and found her having a row about a trunk call to Palm Beach, an entertainment costing eight dollars for three minutes, of which she is inordinately fond. We went off to lunch at Sutton Place, by the river, with Miss Marbury and Miss Elsie de Wolfe.

After lunch Miss de Wolfe drove us to her shop, but by that time, what with two nights in the train and the late night before, we were fit to drop, which indeed we did do, into a "divan" at the Capitol Theatre—a super-cinema, where we enjoyed a film, an opera, a piano concerto, a ballet and, last but not least, a good doze. Refreshed, I went home and talked to Stephen till it was time to dress.

We dined off sandwiches at Diana's, and then Diana's friend Rudolph Kommer took us to the Ziegfeld Folies, which I had much wanted to see. Overcome by coma as I was, I managed to enjoy it very much. I was amazed to find two Parisian scenes

of quite stark ladies: this, in a country where a man is arrested for not wearing a skirt to his bathing-dress, seems to me inconsistent.

After the show we went to the Mirador, where we were to have supper with Stephen. Arrived there we found a room about the size of the Embassy tenanted by some 3,000 people in a congealed mass. It was really very pleasant, though I don't know why we weren't stifled.

About 2 we got up to leave to fulfil a date to go to a low haunt called the El Fey Club. When we got to the El Fey I found a place after my own heart. The room was about half the size of the Mirador, and there were about 1,000 more people there. Towering above all was the gigantic figure of the patroness, Madame Texas Guinan, yelling orders to staff, dancers and guests alike.

We settled down in the middle of the floor, and brought out the three much-depleted, vast silver flasks with which Stephen ventured forth to dinner. On a space about the size of a medium rug the Texas girls danced to us. They were charming, modest and accomplished, and each one was introduced to us in a stentorian bellow by Texas, who gave a resumé of their origin and métier, and

ended up always with the words, "So I want you to give her a great big hand." We all complied lustily.

I drove Diana back about 3 o'clock and then returned to the El Fey with the hope of making a friend of "Little Ruby Keeler." But it was all changed. Stephen was fast asleep, Texas was singing "Memory Lane" in a stentorian voice, and Viola was trying to hush the audience down, for all the world as if it were a Galli-Curci concert at the Albert Hall. Texas came and sat by me, and affectionately christened me "Mr. Thurston," but coma had attacked me too strongly, and I left them. It was 4.30 when I got to bed.

Friday, February 13th. We were to start on a sight-seeing expedition at 9 a.m., but we couldn't get nearer than 10. Stephen took us in his car, and we determined to see as much as possible of New York in the morning.

First of all we went to and over the Manhattan Bridge, and got our first view of the astonishing skyline of this fairy city. Then we drove through the Bowery and into Chinatown, where Diana bought a tea-set; then to Wall Street, where we paid visits to the Cunard and White Star offices. Then we did the



NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE

City Hall ; then went to the Custom House to get leaving permits ; then to the Stock Exchange where Stephen's brother-in-law of the night before showed us the sights. Then Stephen left us, and we shot up the Woolworth Building. It was a novel and entertaining experience rushing up the fifty-four floors in the elevator and seeing floor after floor, all looking exactly the same, tearing past one. Arrived at the supreme pinnacle I disgraced myself, as (a) I could not bear the cold, (b) I did not like the height, which made me giddy ; so I hid myself in the elevator embrasure, which was vomiting forth blasts of hot air, and which mingled oddly with the icy wind. But I saw enough to realize what an amazing sight it was.

We lunched at a cheap eating-house, where one seizes one's plate off the counter and retires to a chair with an arm, where one eats it. We enjoyed it greatly, and made rather beasts of ourselves, topping off a huge meal with " hot dogs."

That evening Diana led us to a house where she said we should find Chaliapine, and a Bohemian party being given in honour of his birthday. We found instead a great concourse of people, exquisitely dressed in the height of the fashion (we were in filthy travelling clothes), a babel of languages, and no Chaliapine.

We were dropping with hunger and thirst and fatigue.

After a long talk with what seemed to be the hostess—a Russian lady, superbly gowned—Diana picked up courage to ask whether we might visit the supper-room. We were told no, because it was Friday the thirteenth, and Chaliapine was superstitious and could not start supper before Saturday the fourteenth. Touched by our crestfallen look, she then said she would smuggle us in and say nothing about it. We were led through a room of exquisites into the supper-room, which was decorated—table, walls and all—with pink hearts cut out of paper. In honour of Chaliapine, on the mantelpiece was a device cut out of blue paper, entitled “Sweet Baby.” On the tables were two partially-filled bottles of whisky. The hostess produced a caviare sandwich, which only served to accentuate my thirst—then almost past endurance. I discovered a half-dead syphon, and managed to fill a glass with whisky and soda. I took a sip. I know now the taste of the famous wood alcohol which killed the Dodge brothers. How I got rid of the glass I don’t know! I stowed it behind a large flower-pot when the hostess’ back was turned. I was now mad with thirst, and had exhausted the syphon.

Then Chaliapine arrived, which was the signal for the hostess to douse the glim in the supper-room, leaving us in inky darkness.

We fought our way out, where we found the great man, who fell round the necks of the girls. A flash-light picture was then taken of him and Diana. He then made a long speech in Russian to the hostess, the purport of which, we discovered, was that he proposed to leave her party forthwith and escort us to the *Olympic*. She turned bright green, and tears sprang into her eyes. Diana managed to persuade him that his duty lay with the bottle of death in the room of the pink hearts; and we made our escape from the house, where we had spent a nightmare hour.

Kommer had gifts for us all—chocolates and cigarettes.

When we got to the vessel we left Diana and sought out our second class cabin where, by the genius of Wade,¹ the baggage was safely stowed. Then we went off to find Diana in the first.

We pushed off about 1. We stayed on deck till it was so cold we could do so no longer. It all looked very beautiful, though it was difficult to see very much, and the Statue of Liberty could not be made out.

¹ Lady Diana Cooper's maid.

But our old friend, the Woolworth, looked fine. I was sad to leave New York, where I should have liked at least another two weeks, but our four days had been enormous fun. And now for home. . . .

THE END

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